TOPEE AND TURBAN

OR HERE AND THERE IN INDIA. BY LIEUT.-COL. H. A. NEWELL, I.A., F.R.G.S.

WITH FIFTY-NINE ILLUSTRATIONS

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FOREWORD

"THE Unchanging East." This picturesque figure of speech has been directly responsible for a vast amount of misconception, and has inspired false theories innumerable. Applied to India the fallacy is not only mischievous but absurd. From time immemorial the great, all-absorbing peninsula has been subjected to wave after wave of foreign invasion. Each newcomer introduced fresh customs, laws, arts, sciences and religious conceptions, in a word the many varying and vivid influences of an unfamiliar civilization. These India assimilated and made her own, much in the same way as she frequently assimilated her conquerors themselves, a process whereby she gained very much more than ever they succeeded in despoiling her of.

At some indefinite period, before the first misty dawn of history, the Aryans forded the Indus, bringing with them metaphysics, and that spiritual mysticism, which, throughout the ages, has rendered the land of their adoption a great psychic power the potentiality of which none may measure. The Greek invasion brought with it the sculptor's art, and the classical style of dress which persists down to the present day. The Persians introduced painting, damascening, embroidery and carpet weaving. Among other things the invading Moghuls imposed

improved agricultural methods, notably the Persian wheel, encaustic tiling and a stable government. From Italy India learnt the art of inlaying by the Florentine method known as pietra dura. The Portuguese instilled a knowledge of reading and writing in the Latin alphabet. The French demonstrated the science of European warfare, and the manufacture of modern weapons. Finally the British flooded the land with material innovations, in which the old laws of Manu, and Muhammad were more or less swept away, and a new legal code substituted.

In the crowded city these diverse influences are so compressed and condensed that, like the many ingredients of a Christmas pudding, they are apt to be swallowed indiscriminately as a whole. Only in the greater liberty, more ample leisure, and wider horizon of the countryside have they space to expand and assert their several individualities. Out in the open, under the vast blue dome of the sky, Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and Muhammadan reveal their ancient spiritual significance in temple, stupa, rock-cut figure and mouldering mosque, weather worn, and possibly ruined but not built over, nor yet obliterated. Each testifies to a distinct period, the vital forces of which are still alive and active. For period I should have substituted influence, had not so eminent an authority as Monsieur A. Foucher taken exception to the term being applied in an archæological connection.

The following sketches by road and river give passing glimpses of these contrasting, and often conflicting civilizations, and the transformation they have wrought in "The Unchanging East."

Written at random, at different times and parts of the country, they were never intended as studies of life, manners, religions and political aspirations, but merely as mental impressions recorded by the eye rather than the mind. As such they are word photographs with a few lines of explanation here and there. The area covered is a wide one ranging from Kashmir, in the far north-west, to Mahamallipuram, the ancient Pallava seaport, in the south-east. Buried deep beneath the dust of ages the very name of the Pallavas, once a powerful dynasty, had died out until rescued from oblivion by the epigraphist, who successfully solved the riddle of the mysteriously carved rocks and rathas lying forgotten on the hot yellow sands of the Coromandel Coast.

Unlike the Pallava, the Aryan is with us yet. He survives true to type in the Kashmiri Brahman. The advanced student of Sanskrit may converse with him at will upon some abstruse metaphysical problem, or the current price of eggs in the bazaar. Monsieur Foucher tells a characteristic anecdote of a Kashmiri Pundit. The celebrated French archæologist was visiting an interesting old temple when he narrowly escaped stepping upon a snake. He enquired of his Brahman companion whether the snake were venomous? The latter did not so much as glance at it. Instead he stood on tip-toe straining to look over the tops of some trees. Then, with a reassuring gesture, he informed Monsieur Foucher that the serpent was perfectly harmless, the snow-capped peak of Haramukh being visible from that spot. It is an article of faith with all Kashmiris that no snake is poisonous within sight of their holy

mount. From this it will be gathered that old beliefs are still a power. The gods are not dead. Despite time, and many changes the ancient faiths live and—let the sceptic and the materialist take heed—" by faith mountains are moved."

I must not omit to acknowledge my indebtedness to the *Pioneer*, *Times of India Illustrated Weekly*, and *Indian Industries and Power* for kind permission to reproduce these sketches.

My grateful thanks are also due to His Highness the Maharajah of Mysore for the photographs which appear of his State.

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TOPEE AND TURBAN

I

NOWSHERA TO ABBOTTABAD BY MOTOR-CAR

I

BAD as vice is, advice is worse. Although keenly alive to this fact I cannot refrain from a word in season to motorists, and that is, "Do not rely upon hearsay but prove it for yourself the moment a car, or a road, is in question." Never was I so persuaded of this truth as during a recent week-end leave to Abbottabad. A man I knew had motored down that way from Kashmir just a fortnight before.

"What is the road like?" I asked him.

"Excellent!" he exclaimed, his face lighting up with enthusiasm. "Ever so much better than via Murree. The dak bungalows are distinctly superior and far less crowded."

This decided me. I should apply for week-end leave and run up to Abbottabad. My plans made, I began to feel strangely reconciled to my surroundings. When, seated outside in the heat of the evening, an unexpected gust of wind scorched me with the fiery force of a blast from a furnace, I actually relished it by anticipating the contrast which a few days would bring. In the same way the sting of the sandfly lost much of its bitterness. I was in this happy frame of mind when I encoun-

tered an I.M.S. Major on the golf-links. We were both waiting our turn to hit off. Without wasting time in preliminaries he began—

"I say, Colonel, you had better abandon that idea of motoring up to Abbottabad. Last week Colonel M. hired a car from Pindi, and started for Tandiani via Hasan Abdal and Abbottabad, but could not get across the Haro. He had to go to Sarai Kala, take the train from there to Havelian and then on by *tonga*. Since then there has been a lot more rain. You could never do it!"

This was disconcerting. I felt like the small boy, whose uncle showed him a sugar-plum, telling him to shut his eyes, open his mouth and see what God would send him. After a long wait, with eyes shut and mouth open, he shut the one and opened the others to find his little brother munching the sugar plum.

"There is Colonel M. over in that bunker," continued my tormentor. "He is playing the General. They are at the last hole. You can ask him for yourself. He was most awfully fed up with the whole thing." So was I for the moment. A long hot weather in Nowshera had made me think enviously of the North Pole. That entrancingly cool spot being outside the twenty-four hour limit allowed to military officers on short leave, I had indulged in visions of Abbottabad instead. Not that I had ever been to that station, but I pictured it a place of high hills on which things grew, of greenery, of rain, of clouds and mists and—oh, bliss beyond compare!—of chilly dawns, when one indulged in the ecstasy of a shiver that was not fever born, and stretched out a loving hand for a blanket.

I glanced at the tall, spare figure in grey, wielding the putter as only a Scotchman can. Was he to shatter all my dreams? I raised my eyes to the double row of arid hills, their sun-blighted peaks drawing jagged lines across the hot cloudless sky, then dropped them to the scarlet velvet beetle crawling slowly over the scorched sand at my feet. Talk about terra cotta! This earth was not cooked. It was burnt and burning. The hills, the sky, the sand and, above all, the beetle decided me. I would not consult Colonel M. I would ford the Haro and try for Abbottabad even if I perished in the attempt.

On Friday, the 3rd August, I started from Nowshera at 5 p.m. Apparently the car—a 1913 Sunbeam, 12–16 horse power—was as eager to be off as I. It was difficult to keep her down to twenty miles an hour as we sped along the straight road between dusty *farash* trees, their feathery pink tips of a week before deepened to a russet brown. To the right lay the railway line and, beyond it, a low sandy ridge backed by other and higher hills that shut out the horizon to the south-east. On the left flowed the Kabul River, its further bank fringed with the tall white plumes of densely-growing elephant grass. Behind again the Marble Rocks showed a delicate yellowish pink in the clear light, and further off still rose the gaunt barricade of mountains that intervene between British India, and the No Man's Land dividing the last outposts of empire from the restless Swat country.

I had covered eight miles when I ran past the artillery camping ground near Akora, a big village of picturesque aspect set back some three-quarters

of a mile from the Grand Trunk Road. The slender minars of its mosques showed above the encircling mud walls, as did several residences of distinction, their flat faces painted in pastel shades picked out with arabesque designs in white. When I first saw these last there was something familiar about them that puzzled me. Where had I seen them before? At length it flashed upon me. They were merely large editions of the dolls' houses my sisters played with in the long ago.

As usual near dawn or sunset I had to drive with caution on account of the cattle blocking the way. Soon after passing the Military Works Bungalow, at Khoond, the Kabul River merges into the Indus. There is nothing sensational about the meeting, no shock of mighty waters; merely a faint rippling line that is not even a wave, beyond where the intervening land tapers to a flat, featureless point and vanishes.

Under the Railway Bridge at Attock the Indus is forty feet deep. I crossed by the subway, paying the usual fee of two rupees. On the further side the road winds upwards to the main gate of Attock Fort, an imposing edifice covering a wide area. Its defences extend down to the water's edge. In Sikh times it played an important part owing to its strategical position on the Indus and Grand Trunk Road.

A steep road of sudden turns curves down through a number of ruined houses, their roofs shot off and gaping gun wounds in their walls. Several ancient Pathan and Moghul mausolea still linger by the way, the mansions of the dead outlasting those of the living, possibly because few covet a tomb.

From there on to Hasan Abdal the road is easy going, and pleasantly shaded with big *shisham* trees. Much of the land is cultivated but there is little traffic.

Nine miles north of Hasan Abdal a long wooden girder bridge spans the Haro. When I arrived the gates were closed. A quantity of cattle and some dozen camels were waiting patiently. I proceeded to follow their example. When some ten minutes elapsed and nothing happened, I sounded the hooter. The noise created a stir among the bullocks, and several goats made off in alarm; otherwise it had no apparent effect. At this I despatched my servant to reconnoitre. He returned with the news that a train was expected. Another interval and, finally, a number of heavily laden trucks crawled slowly into view. Cheered by the vision I proceeded to crank up. Still the gates remained shut. Again I sent my servant forward. He did not return, so I followed. It transpired that the driver of the goods train had failed to pick up the points, hence the additional delay. Fully forty minutes were wasted before I could get across.

It was 7.30 p.m. when I turned sharply to the left off the Grand Trunk Road. I ran up a short sharpish hill, swerved round to the right and into the familiar compound of the dak bungalow at Hasan Abdal, having covered fifty miles without a puncture. Warned of my coming by wire, the *khansama* was out to greet me, as were the bearer, the *bhisti* and the remainder of the staff, not omitting the great, gaunt hound, his ribs almost worn through his shabby grey and white coat. He wagged his ancient tail feebly in welcome. The

meat-safe hung in its accustomed tree and the cupboard stood on the verandah as of yore.

High up on the bare mountain top the light twinkled, beacon-like, from the white shrine of Hasan Abdal. "So shines a good deed in a naughty world." As I deposited my *topi* on the table in the big bare sitting-room, a savoury odour of cooking assailed my nostrils. At the same time I felt conscious of a curious sensation of being *chez moi*.

An hour later I saw my servant proceeding to put up the mosquito net. "Leh Jao!" I cried, "Nahin chahiye." That night I slept outside on the open plateau behind the bungalow, looking towards the Moghul Gardens of Wah, immortalized in "Lalla Rookh." Somewhere amid the shadowy trees bounding the compound at the back lurked a *chowkidar* guarding the honey. Overhead a million billion stars twinkled from a velvet sky. They seemed unusually bright and near. Yet other stars blinked up from the village—the lights of Hasan Abdal. High above, in his shrine on the hilltop, burnt the Saint's miraculous lamp which neither wind nor rain may quench. Every now and again a flash of lightning rent the darkness revealing the radiance that lies behind the blackest night.

Muffled by distance the beating of tomtoms floated drowsily towards me. It came from the Durbar Panja Sahib. For an instant I became wonderfully far-sighted. I saw the still waters of the tank of the Holy Hand, the sleeping fish in its sacred depths, the glistening marble banks, the musicians squatted in the lighted temple, and the bearded *mahunt* presiding over all.

The vision faded. A cool breeze fanned my face as though from an invisible punkah. I drew the sheet about me murmuring inarticulate blessings upon Guru Nanak, who has endowed Hasan Abdal for all time with those priceless blessings, running water and a refreshing breeze.

6 a.m., on a grey Saturday morning. A mist hung, purdah like, before the white shrine on the hill. For the time being Hasan Abdal was invisible as the Veiled Prophet of Khorassan. I doffed the clammy sheet and donned damp shoes. An hour later I was cranking up.

II

A metalled road runs from Hasan Abdal to Abbottabad, a distance of forty-four miles. On leaving the dak bungalow, I turned to the right following a straight and slightly ascending course. I had not gone far when I passed a small masjid and Moghul tomb. A little further on a side track, on the left, led to the railway station. A second, branching off to the right, ran down hill to the far-famed garden of Lalla Rookh, and the scarcely less celebrated Sikh temple of Panja Sahib.

It was what the Irish would call "a soft morning." A fine drizzle was falling, and the sky was low and overcast. The clouds were all grey and showed no glimpse of a silver lining. *Shisham* trees bordered the way, their yellow pods investing the vivid green foliage with an illusion of sunshine. On either hand the horizon was determined by an irregular line of hills. Banks of clouds rested on

their peaks, whence some slipped down, clinging to the bare sides with the tenacity of cotton wool. Every now and again a long dull rumble of thunder seemed the echo of distant artillery.

Near the second milestone a rocky ridge seemed about to trespass upon the highway when it changed its mind and stopped abruptly. The surrounding country showed signs of cultivation. Maize grew in patches of varying height. Gradually the landscape grew wilder, becoming broken and cut up with ravines which, here and there, displayed a dark, cave-like aperture. Presently banks rose up at either side shutting out further view. Soon they died down again to allow a glimpse of a small fertile valley filled with trees, and, beyond, a mud village of flat-roofed houses.

Between the fifth and sixth milestones the road developed a steep winding hill. Thereafter it emerged into open country planted with maize. A little more and it sloped downward beneath an avenue of *shisham* trees to the Haro River, six and three-quarter miles from Hasan Abdal. By this time the drizzle had increased to a steady downpour. Fourteen bullock wagons blocked the advance. They were drawn up closely together as though for mutual protection. Each had its ridged cover of cotton, or matting. I stopped the car and proceeded to take my bearings. Instantly I was surrounded by a group of bullock drivers all eager to impart information. According to their account it had rained all night and the river was impassable. In addition the wooden approaches had broken down. They themselves had been stuck on the bank for hours. At this juncture a tall youth

approached and offered to act as guide. It could be done, he declared, by making a détour.

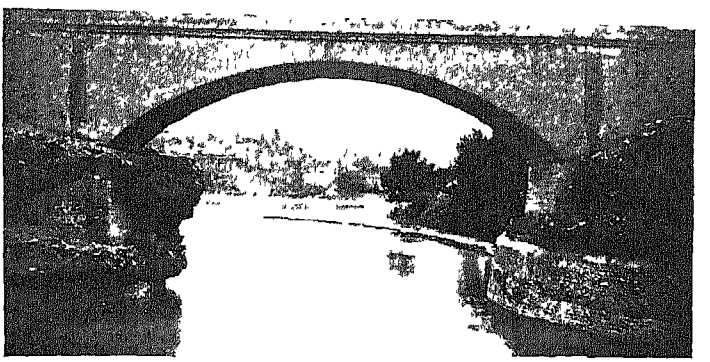
I looked across at the quarter of a mile of muddy water, churned in places into waves, and must confess to certain misgivings. After all "discretion is the better part of valour." It would be a thousand pities if anything happened to the car. Then I remembered Colonel M., and pictured the triumphant smile and the "I told you so!" wherewith the I.M.S. Major would greet the news of my failure. This clinched the matter. I wonder how many destinies have been decided by a smile or a sneer?

Handing the camera to my servant I told him to go on ahead and snapshot the car in the river. "Chelo!" I cried to the guide, and prepared to follow. Leaving the road the man struck to right across a boulder-strewn stretch of sand. Bump! Bump! Bump! The car rose to the occasion in a manner that endeared her to me for ever. Then I gripped the wheel more firmly and took the water. My guide led me a zigzag course with a decided trend to the left. The river bed was stony and it was difficult to follow. At last I found myself on a low, grass-grown ridge in the middle. The worst was yet to come. The bank sloped down into really deep water. Instantly the floor of the car was flooded. The water dashed up against the glass wind-screen completely blotting out everything. Higher it rose and higher, splashing above my waist and wetting my face. Still the car did not stop. I could hear the engine panting against the flood. The current caught the car and partially swung her round. Now for it! I clenched my teeth and gripped the

wheel. Another moment and she must be swept out of her depth and overturned. Still she did not stop. Shallower water, thank Heaven! Then up a slippery incline and safe! I felt inclined to pat the grey bonnet and say, "Good girl!" Unfortunately my servant, in his fear lest I should drown, had forgotten to take a photo.

From there on the road was good, and flanked by *shisham* trees and fields of maize. After passing through a small village it ran, switchback fashion, down one steep hill and up another. Beyond the eighth milestone it again descended. Here it was shaded by an avenue of particularly fine *shisham* trees, their branches meeting overhead. To right, in the far distance, a curious effect was lent by a number of pyramid-shaped mounds ranged along the foot of the mountains. They revived memories of Egypt and the Pharaohs. Twelve miles from Hasan Abdal the good metalled road is marred by another wide and stony river bed. This was dry excepting for three small streams. Fearful of my tyres, I crossed slowly.

Two and a half miles further on I sighted a small masonry bridge of three arches spanning a deep *nalla*. Simultaneously a loud report intimated a puncture. The rain had stopped and the sun was shining through a blue rift in the clouds immediately above. I wished that it might have chosen some other spot, for the trees had ceased and the place was bare of shade. To right some hundreds of sparrows were huddled along the telegraph wires. I changed the tyre and restarted. Hardly had I gone half a dozen yards when a fresh and a more violent explosion signalled a second puncture. This



VIEW OF KABUL RIVER BELOW NOWSHERA



MUHAMMADAN GRAVES IN THE DESERT NEAR NOWSHERA

time it was not a stone. In his zeal the boy had pumped too much air into the tube. A tall and venerable-looking wayfarer, his grey beard dyed a brilliant red, whether from piety or vanity I cannot pretend to say, hastened to the rescue. His assistance resembled that of Handy Andy at the circus, namely, he stood looking on and occasionally proffered a little well-meant advice regarding the direction in which the obdurate hubcap might be induced to turn. His intention was good but the advice bad. I do not know about other people's hubcaps, but mine unscrew from left to right, as I have vainly sought to impress upon my boy. He is always so convinced to the contrary that we waste much time and strength ere we prove him wrong and me right.

Across the bridge of three arches and up a hill shaded with more fine *shisham* trees. To left some men were ploughing the red earth with the archaic wooden implements in use when Manu compiled his immortal code as the waters were settling after the flood.

Hardly a pedestrian was encountered. There were birds in plenty. The brilliant blue jay, with his curious scurrying manner of flight, the vividly striped houp-hou, believed by Moslems to be the Prophet's messenger, the minar, and that irrepressible character the crow, here, there and everywhere, in his dapper grey collar and waistcoat, his immaculate black, and that alert manner of holding his head, reminiscent of counsel quizzing a witness.

Whatever the country, the road was uniformly good. This rendered it the more surprising that no

attempt had been made to improve the frequent river crossings. In a case of the kind even a so-called "Irish Bridge" is better than no bridge at all.

As the altitude increased, the landscape showed a few scattered trees. Villages became more frequent. High sandbanks overhung with bushes rose up at either side of the road as it ran through a cutting to a broad river bed strewn with stones. On the opposite bank a few *farash* trees put in a brief appearance to be speedily replaced by the accustomed *shisham*. The horizon had expanded. To right and left the mountains had receded, leaving a broad expanse of flat country planted with maize and *mong*, the latter a small bush starred with yellow flowers.

Near the nineteenth milestone a stream meandered along a rocky river crossing. Another mile and a half and the road split in two. Bearing to the right, I ran into Haripur between densely growing trees, from which an occasional eucalyptus, or silver birch stood out by reason of its lighter colouring. On the left showed the dak bungalow, all approach thereto barred by a crowd of applicants for enlistment. Facing it was the Lakshmi Chand High School, an imposing red building, near neighbour to a big boarding-house for scholars conspicuous for an unexpected architectural feature in the shape of a number of small Jain spires. Beyond was a large *sarai*. The entire village was embowered in trees amid which I noted a number of bananas and several moderately sized banyans.

For a while the road ran parallel with the railway line on the right. It passed through the big village

of Baksuda, distinguished by quite a good-sized mosque, and a large house, evidently that of the Lombadar. Thereafter it sloped downwards, between high banks, to ford a wide river bed rendered passable by a paved way. On the further side were more high banks. These speedily gave place to an avenue of *shishams*.

Twenty-six miles from Hasan Abdal the road switchbacks up and down a steep declivity. By now the clouds had dispersed somewhat. As they rolled back they revealed a vision of green mountains in place of gaunt and sunbaked hills. To left of the road yawned a stony river bed, its boulders moistened by three trickling streams. Gradually it changed its course to the right and the road dipped down to meet it. Here the crossing was so bad that, for a moment, I thought the car had met her Waterloo.

At last I was in the hills, or so it seemed. The soil offered little inducement to cultivators. Maize grew in patches upon small terraces of the kind familiar in Italy. Close to the twenty-eighth milestone a triangular caution mark signalled a zigzag turning. Slightly further on a tall hedge of aloes, on the left, screened some Muhammadan graves. Two miles more and a short side-track to right led in a straight line to the railway station. Very soon another river bed was encountered. This had a so-called "Irish Bridge." Unfortunately the stones were either loose, or missing, and the entire causeway fraught with danger to motors.

Between the thirty-first and thirty-second milestones the road descended a steep hill and curved sharply to the left down a bank into a river bed that

could only be described as a bog. Very soon the wheels of the car sank to the axle and stuck fast. Coolies were collected, and ten of them pushed the car, with infinite labour, through a hundred and fifty feet of mire and stones. The irony of it was that, once across, the road was excellent. *Shishams* lined the way, forming a delightful avenue. The surrounding country was stony, only growing a little coarse grass.

Just before it came to a long white bridge the road formed a fork, the right prong of which ran under a narrow stone arch to Havelian railway station, the terminus of the line.

Three white bridges crossed as many rivers at brief intervals. The road wound round the cliff side. On the left lay the river bed far below, its stony surface furrowed by two meagre channels of water. At the thirty-sixth milestone I encountered the first of a series of sharp curves. Here the road called for careful driving. I was none too pleased to be met by a long string of bullock wagons, no two of which wished to keep to the same side.

As I ascended, the mountains closed round in a semicircle. Those in the near distance looked strangely green to eyes long accustomed to stark khaki heights. Those further away were the blue shade of the bloom on black grapes. After ascending a while the road took an unexpected dip and ran down to a bridge across a river just thirty-nine miles from Hasan Abdal. It soon wearied of the depths and started to reclimb the cliff side.

Near the fortieth milestone I came upon a particularly bad stretch. The winding road was ploughed up for quite a distance. Coolies were at

work making good with a quantity of sharp stones. My car not being fitted up as a steam roller came to grief. She got safely over the danger zone and ran two or three yards when a tyre punctured.

It was raining again. In the river bed, about sixty feet below, a small boy, in a blue shirt, was shepherding some cows; at least he was sitting with his back to them staring up at the road. The mountains looked wonderfully green. *Tongas* and bullock wagons kept passing up and down. A company of Gurkhas tramped along. Sturdy men they were, their "wide-awake" hats at a jaunty angle, and the deadly *kukris* in their belts. I had seen them and their *kukris* in France and I know.

The melodious sound of rushing water floated up from a little torrent dashing energetically along the broad river bed, and looking as ludicrous a misfit as a small boy in his father's boots.

Leaving my servant to tackle the hubcap, a subject upon which we always disagree, I strolled over to a giant thistle literally swarming with magnificent butterflies and regretted that Maclellan was not present with his net. With one exception, a fine big fellow with splendid orange wings, all were black underneath and iridescent above. Beside the thistle the stony face of the cliff was beautified by a green creeper with long spiky leaves, the veins of which put forth upstanding thorns. Curiously enough so fierce and war-like a plant grew the mildest of mauve flowers. Near by was a feathery green bush with little pink blossoms, each diminutive bloom shaped like a chimney-sweep's brush. Stretching out to break off a branch my fingers

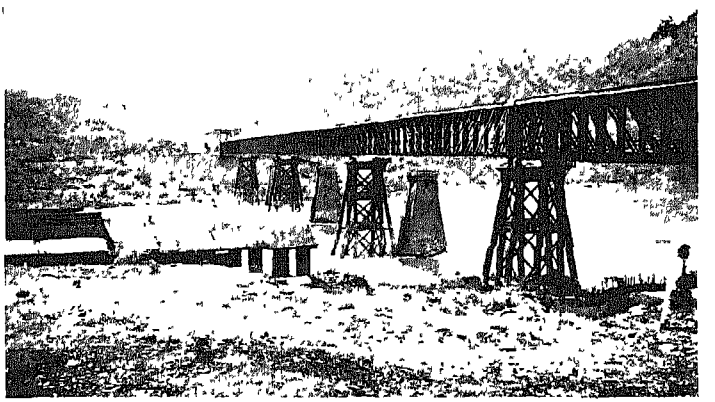
closed upon a stem prickly as a hedgehog, or the quills of the "fretful porcupine."

Rather disillusioned by this experience I turned to help my boy put on a fresh tyre. This proved a longer job than usual. A patch had to be adjusted and a new valve. A good many pedestrians passed. For the most part they affected colourless garments that lent nothing to the landscape. One picturesque figure, with a beautiful intense face, curling hair to far below the waist and a long blue garment, might have posed as John the Baptist. He passed by swiftly all unseeing the ground he trod, his fixed gaze intent upon some "vision beautiful." Was he *Sadhu, Fakir* or Prophet? He looked the last.

A tall old woman, wrinkled and seamed with age and hard living, managed to look wonderfully effective, thanks to a flowing crimson drapery that swept behind her with the classic severity of a French widow's mourning veil.

At last the tyre was on. Simultaneously the drizzle ceased. "Excelsior!" I murmured and gave the crank a vigorous turn. The steep road curved higher, leaving the river further and further below until the music of the streamlet sounded faint as an echo. On the opposite side a waterfall looked as though a giant had unwound his turban and hung it carelessly upon the rock. Presently a parting in the mountains allowed a view of a lofty pine-clad peak. To left, below the road level, a sunken village showed nothing but the thatch of its flat roofs.

A mile from Abbottabad the road ceased to ascend. Instead it twisted down between fragrant pines. I caught a yellow glory of towering sunflowers, the



ATTOCK BRIDGE ACROSS THE INDUS

tallest I had ever seen, a red glow from a tree laden with majenta blossoms and then, to right, into the compound of the dak bungalow.

I had forded the Haro ! I had reached Abbottabad !

Unfortunately there is no rose without a thorn. The *khansama* was weighed down with contrition; voice, face, bearing, all expressed it, but all four rooms were occupied ! At one end an officer was ill in bed with fever. At the other a Missionary Miss Sahib was down with the same fell complaint. As for the central rooms each had its Sahib, but he would do his best.

2.30 p.m.—Tiffin on the verandah. A savoury stew of mutton and potatoes followed by pears and custard. Thereafter I lay stretched out on a long chair. Time enough to stroll around Cantonments later on. I felt delightfully drowsy. My head nodded. Without the slightest exertion on my part I was suddenly transported to the further bank of the Haro. I found myself speeding over a fine white marble bridge, with noble arches and pierced lattice work balustrades such as Shah Jahan would have designed, in an automobile of superlative excellence, and of a build unlike anything ever seen before. Far below an overturned car was being swept away by the torrent. Clinging to one of the wheels, white-faced and drowning, was Colonel M. On the sandbank in the middle stood the I.M.S. Major, a complacent smile on his face as he murmured, " I told you so."

II

SRINAGAR TO HARWAN

"HAPPY the country and the woman without a history," says the French bon mot. Possibly so, but how dull! Who, if given the choice, would not prefer a past, though a sad one, redeemed by the saving grace of romance, to that worst of all tragedies, the tragedy of the commonplace? For those in sympathy with the French quotation the twelve miles of winding road between Srinagar and Harwan will possess little charm. History of a strangely varied kind casts a light here, a shadow there over hill and valley, stream and lake throughout the entire countryside. There is no escaping the magic influence. Romance is here, there and everywhere with its powerful appeal to the imagination, its stirring of unsuspected chords, its harping upon old strings that still reverberate to the echo of long-forgotten music played by vanished hands in a haunting minor key.

On leaving the "City Fortunate" the road to Harwan winds northward between lines of tall poplars. These act as escort, with but few breaks, the greater part of the way. At first the road skirts the foot of Takht-i-Sulaiman, or the Throne of Solomon, a high and somewhat gaunt hill that takes its name from an ancient mosque perched on its summit. Numerous are the legends which cluster

about this shrine. The most popular claims that it was originally a Buddhist Stupa erected 220 B.C. by King Jalauka, a sovereign whom Kalhana's Rajatarangini, or River of Kings, identifies as son of the mighty Buddhist Emperor Asoka. Some authorities incline rather to the belief that it was the famous Hindu temple of Jyestharuda, founded by Jaluka after he had abandoned Buddhism and reverted to worship of the old gods. The hill owes its sanctity to a tradition that it was the scene of Siva's dramatic rescue of Jyestha, otherwise Parvati, from the Daityas. Thereafter, he and the goddess were united in marriage, whereupon Siva assumed the title Jyesthesa in addition to the many by which he was already designated. Whether Buddhist or Hindu the old shrine was forcibly converted to the tenets of Islam about A.D. 1015 soon after the first Muhammadan conquest of Kashmir. It was then that it received its present name of Takht-i-Suliman. The original structure was partially demolished and a domed building erected from the ruins. This still dominates the surrounding country, forming a familiar landmark for many miles. As is only to be expected under the rule of a Hindu Maharaja the sanctuary is once more dedicated to the worship of Siva. Though shorn of its glories and much of its odour of sanctity, its hoary roof shelters the mystical emblem banished for nigh upon a thousand years. Its worn stones again echo to the prayers of an aged priest, who bends in *puja* before the *lingam*, scatters the yellow petals of the marigold and pours out copious libations of holy water. The foot of the hill is historic ground. Here Akbar's troops inflicted a decisive

defeat in 1586 upon the army of the last Sultan of Kashmir, the degenerate son of the great Zain-ul-ab-ul-Din.

To the right of the winding road lie a few modern bungalows. The majority are adaptations of old English cottage style, and would be picturesque but for disfiguring roofs of zinc. Beyond stretches the broad Jhelum, known in the country proper as the Veth, a corruption of the Sanskrit Vitasta.

Ere long the houses are left behind as the highway curves round to north of Takht-i-Suliman. A road, to the west, branches off in the direction of the State Distillery, where red and white wines used to be prepared under the supervision of a Frenchman. I have tasted the former, a species of thin *vin ordinaire*.

A little further on a row of wooden sheds are passed on the right. These contain several fine *barasingh* (stags), belonging to the Maharaja. Some few hundred yards more and a signboard, bearing the inscription "Chashma Shahi," points eastwards through a plantation of willows.

For Kashmiris, their springs are invested with peculiar significance. In ancient times they were held sacred. Each had its tutelary deity, a *Nag* or snake. Although the majority of the population now profess the faith forced upon them by their Muhammadan conquerors, the many streams and rills of their native land are still very dear to their hearts, so that I was not surprised when the *tonga-walla* urged upon me temporarily to turn aside to visit the Chashma Shahi, or Imperial Fountain.

The way thereto traverses the ancient village of Thid, the Theda of the Chronicles, where the saintly

King Aryaraja — of whom more anon — erected numerous *lingams* and statues to divinities. The Ain-i-Akbari alludes to it as "a delightful spot where seven springs unite." All relics of Aryaraja's buildings have disappeared, such houses as there are being the usual two-storied hovels, of stone and mud, grass growing on the projecting roofs, and the window openings filled in with carved wooden lattice work. Probably the seven streams still water the densely growing willows amid which the village hides. Soon the lane leads out into the open country of the hillside. A little distance off, to the south-east, a series of arcaded terraces of buff-coloured stone rest upon a projecting spur of the mountain. These constitute the Peri Mahal, or Fairies' Palace, built by Akbar for the ladies of his harem. It is now little more than a picturesque ruin festooned with the green of grass and a profusion of weeds.

The lane ends at a pleasant modern bungalow, the lower storey of red brick and the upper in old English cottage style—the residence of the Maharaja's *Guru*, or spiritual guide. From here rough steps and a bridge lead to a narrow path flanked by low stone walls. After a while the path follows a babbling brook, crystal clear in places, blood red in others, where its stony bed is carpeted with a vivid crimson weed that looks like drowned red hair. Willows cast a welcome shade overhead, for the sun is still hot although it is October.

Suddenly further progress is barred by a long masonry wall pierced by a gate-house, through which a narrow wooden door admits to the unexpected beauty of a stately Moghul garden laid out

by Shah Jahan. Crossing the threshold I passed at a step from the twentieth to the seventeenth century. Possibly it would have been more appropriate had I entered backwards.

Time has stood still in that secret pleasaunce guarded from hostile winds by a high barricade of mountains, along the foot of which it stretches in three terraces from north to south. Six deep steps lead to the highest terrace, its southern boundary defined by a three-sided pavilion of white walls and grass-grown roof, the window openings jealously guarded by carved wooden screens. Its upper gallery looks down upon two tanks and a fountain, the Chashma Shahi.

A stone channel traverses the centre of the garden between paved walks outlined with brilliantly coloured flowers in terra cotta pots. Pear and apple trees grow on the smooth emerald lawns, and there are flower-beds gay with asters, cosmos, salvia and geranium, in a blaze of red and purple, yellow and white.

The second terrace ends in a larger and more imposing pavilion, whence a cascade dashes some forty feet into the pleasaunce below to fill a big tank and five tall ornamental fountains.

Viewed from one of the latticed windows of the pavilion the panorama is of exceptional beauty. To east all view is barred by mountains. To make amends to west the placid waters of the Dal reflect, as in a mirror, every detail of the surrounding country, the willows and poplars, the blue sky and fleecy white clouds, the islets described by Bernier as "So many pleasure grounds," and the green heights of Hari Parbat, "the Verdant Hill," its

lofty brow encircled, coronet fashion, by the buff-coloured walls of the old Fort, whence a cannon thunders thrice within every twenty-four hours, namely at midday, at 10 p.m. and again at three o'clock in the morning. The vulgar pretend that so long as the gun fires, that dreaded visitor, the cholera, will not come to Srinagar. Others declare that to the Maharaja, in his palace of Sher Garhi overlooking the Jhelum, the gun is a call to prayer. Personally I cannot truthfully state that it is exactly a prayer I utter when suddenly awakened at 3 a.m.

Returning to the main road it is not long before it skirts the shores of the Dal outside the gates of Nishat Bagh. This lovely garden ascends the foot of the mountain in a series of fourteen terraces gay with many-coloured flowers, and musical with the splash of waterfalls and fountains. Planned by Shah Jahangir it was a favourite resort of his and of his celebrated Empress, Nur Jahan. Shortly afterwards the road enters the village of Ishabor, famed in ancient times as a spot of much sanctity under the name of Suresvariksetra, the Field of Suresvari, one of the many appellations of the goddess Durga. Hither the pious came to die. It is still a favourite resort with pilgrims for whom the great attraction is a spring known as Gupta Ganga. This lies to right of the road inside a large walled enclosure shaded by big *chenars*. The ground is littered with mounds of red earth, piles of stone and the fallen trunks of trees. To east is a fair-sized masonry tank of dilapidated aspect and slimy green water. A high wall to north divides it from a smaller tank stocked with fish, its eastern side marked by small carved deities smeared with red

paint and sprinkled with marigold petals. This is the sacred Gupta Ganga to which worshippers flock in thousands at the Baisakhi festival. To west, in an enclosure near the outer wall of the compound, is a still dirtier tank reserved for Auratlog. Gazing into its murky depths I was moved to reflect that it is a thousand pities cleanliness should be next to godliness. Were they less near neighbours they might be on better terms.

The honours were done by an old man of imposing aspect. Tall and broad-shouldered he wore the customary *pheran*, a loose gown, wide-sleeved and open at the throat, which slips over the head shirt fashion, and reaches to just below the knees. In his case it had probably once been white. Time and dirt had stained it an indefinite shade of grey. His skull cap was of the same neutral tint and came low down behind on his abundant white locks. His flowing beard partly concealed a string round his neck threaded sparingly with a rosary of carved brown wooden beads. Bright yellow and white caste marks stood out prominently on his forehead and aquiline nose. His manner was frank and friendly, and his shrewd brown eyes had a twinkle in them that bespoke many things, intelligence and good humour among the number. There was nothing secretive or mysterious about this guardian of Gupta Ganga. He was very glad to show me round and impart such information as he possessed. Had he not roamed the valleys and climbed the neighbouring mountains with the famous Sir Aurel Stein in search of archæological treasure trove!

Following where he led I mounted twelve steps, passed through a wooden gate-house with a square



Photo J. J. Shorter

VIEW OF TAKHT-I-SULAIMAN (THE THRONE OF SOLOMON), SHOWING CLUB, SRINAGAR

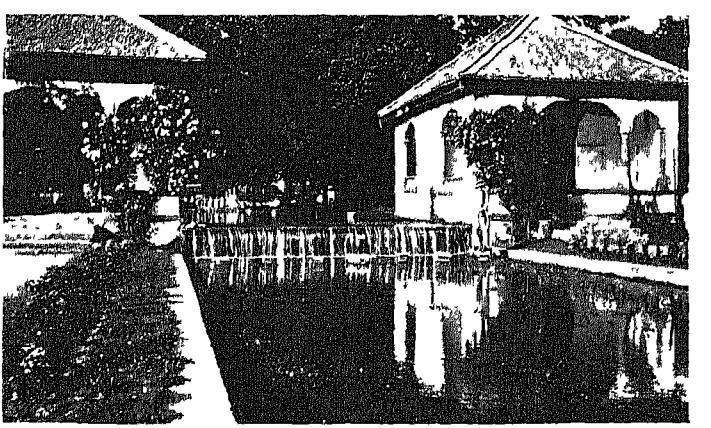


Photo J. J. Shorter

SHALIMAR BAGH, JAHAN'S GARDEN

grass-grown roof, and so into a secret orchard, a veritable wilderness of fruit trees and many-coloured flowers, virgin blue and purple-red convolvuli, scarlet asters and yellow marigolds. To left, immediately inside the wall, stands all that remains—a weed-ground platform—of the ancient temple of Isesvara, erected about A.D. 200 by King Samdhimat Aryaraja to the honour of his *Guru*, Isana. The monarch in question was the hero of a romance well worth the telling. As Samdhimat he was Prime Minister of Kashmir under King Jeyendra, a monarch to whom the gods had refused an heir. Samdhimat was a model of all the virtues and his praises echoed throughout the land. As a very natural result the King grew jealous, deprived him of office, confiscated his property and banished him from Court. So far from repining at this Samdhimat welcomed his reverse of fortune as freeing him from worldly cares. From then on he dedicated his life to worship of Siva.

Plunged in poverty and devotion though he was, a mysterious report spread through the country, "To Samdhimat will belong the kingdom." No sooner did this rumour reach the King's ears than he caused the ex-minister to be seized, loaded with fetters and cast into prison. Here Samdhimat languished, in durance vile, for ten years. At the end of this period the King fell ill. Feeling death approach, his jealous hatred of Samdhimat flamed up afresh. With almost his last breath he ordered the unhappy man to be impaled. The command was executed with a promptitude deserving of a better cause, and Samdhimat, whom misfortune had rendered friendless, expired alone in agony

on the stake. Here he was sought by his *Guru* Isana.

This good man desired to honour the remains of his former patron with funeral rites. He found the corpse surrounded by wolves. The animals had torn away the flesh. Driving them off Isana removed the skeleton. As he was preparing it for the pyre the following message suddenly appeared written across the brows: "He is destined for a life of poverty, ten years' imprisonment, death at the stake and thereafter a throne."

Greatly impressed, as well he might be, Isana decided not to fire the wood but to wait by the skeleton, and see whether the fourth prophecy would be fulfilled as the three first had been.

One night, as he lay awake, pondering upon the mystery, the air was filled with the fragrance of incense. Simultaneously he heard the ringing of innumerable bells and the beating of drums. Going to the window of his house he looked out. A supernatural light illumined the adjoining graveyard, where a number of female forms were gathered about the skeleton of Samdhimat.

Drawing his sword Isana went out, trembling and cold with fear. Hidden behind a tree he watched while the goddesses, for such they were, clothed the bones with flesh. Next they summoned the wandering spirit of Samdhimat back to his earthly body. Perceiving that dawn was about to break over the mountain tops, Isana feared lest the goddesses should withdraw their gift, for they were in merry mood, having partaken liberally of the wine of the country—rather stronger, I fancy, than the *vin ordinaire* I sampled. To prevent their doing

so he uttered a loud shout. Immediately they vanished. Only their voices were heard, calling to him in chorus: "Fear not, Isana! He whom we have invested with a heavenly body will be known on earth as Samdhimat and, on account of his noble character, as Aryaraja."

Thus the fourth prophecy was fulfilled and to Samdhimat belonged a kingdom. In due course he erected the temple of Isesvara, now a ruined mound, its cold grey stones warmed by the clear autumn sunshine. White butterflies flit over it, flirting now with a blue convolvulus, next with a yellow marigold.

The ancient priest, who had climbed the heights with Stein, next led me to a more modern shrine in the south-east corner of the orchard, its tall silver spire glimmering through the green of the trees. It stands at the angle of two arcaded verandahs solidly built of stone, quarried probably from the older temple. An open door revealed the cella, a bare stone chamber with a shabby *charpai* against the further wall, and a large black *lingam* powdered with marigold leaves, in the centre, beneath a metal bell suspended from a chain.

Eight and a half miles from Srinagar the road passes the Maharaja's model farm. Next comes the celebrated garden of Shalamar designed by Shah Jahan, its long walls overlooked now and again by a picturesque octagonal pavilion whence, no doubt, some fair Juliet of old gazed down upon her forbidden Romeo, knowing full well the penalty to be death. Beyond the garden the country is strewn with boulders of the kind found on the sea-shore. Small streams thread their course amid

willows and poplars while over to the east stretches the mountain ridge known of old as Sridvara. Dominating all is the lofty peak of Mahadeva, which soars 13,000 feet in its ambitious effort to push back the blue of the sky, and only succeeds in losing its head amid the clouds.

On to the village of Harwan, a modern contraction of Sadarhadvana, meaning "the wood of the six Arhats" or Saints, famed as the dwelling-place of the great Buddhist teacher Nagarjuna, the thirteenth patriarch mentioned in the Chronicles of Kashmir as having lived in the second century after Buddha. Other historians place Nagarjuna during the reign of Kaniska, some two hundred years later.

Now the neighbourhood is celebrated for its trout hatcheries introduced from England by command of the Maharaja about fifteen years ago. The first lies to right of the road two and a half miles to the north of Shalamar. The approach is rustic in the extreme, merely a plank thrown across a stream, then an ascending path through willows to a walled enclosure shaded by walnut trees. Here shallow weed-grown canals are protected by wire netting from the sudden darting attacks of the small, but determined kingfisher, who, in his golden brown waistcoat and wings of vivid peacock blue, would play sad havoc among the young trout were he not prevented. Another foe to guard against is the water rat.

The first canal contains brown trout up to seven months old. The second is reserved for rainbow trout, a more recent and less successful importation first brought from California in 1913. This species is delicate and peculiarly susceptible to disease.

As I stood looking down into the water an attendant approached and threw in handfuls of food. This looked like bran but was in reality a preparation of maize, rice and dried fish.

Further along the road is a second and larger enclosure containing big trout for breeding purposes. Some of these weigh as much as eighteen pounds. I saw them fed with small fish. In its eagerness one big fellow leapt right out onto the bank, turned a couple of somersaults and splashed back into its native element.

Replying to my questions the overseer told me that the average life of trout is ten years. They begin to give eggs at three. The close season for brown trout is November, December and January, and for the rainbow variety, March and April. The eggs are placed in wire baskets, or trays, and kept in running water for two months when they hatch out. At eight months old they are let loose in certain hill streams.

The industry is not a profitable one. A little money is obtained from the issue of licences, the charge for which is Rs. 5 per diem, or Rs. 60 for five months. Small trout are sold at Rs. 3 the lb., larger ones costing Rs. 2 per lb. The first hatcheries were established at Rakhnu, about four miles further up the road, but were removed to the present site as more accessible, and also less affected by flood and cholera. From the hatcheries I drove to Harwan reservoir, a distance of less than half a mile. The approach is guarded by police in khaki with *puggaris* of dark blue and red. Entering a walled compound I passed a long low building with grass-grown roof and grated windows, then up a

wooden staircase of many steps to the western bank of the reservoir, a large and very beautifully situated sheet of water, the clear green of aquamarine where the sunshine falls upon it, deep emerald in the shadow. On three sides its sun-kissed surface reflects the surrounding hills until the world seems upside down, and the blue dome of the sky a vast azure bowl painted around with tree-clad mountains. The reservoir receives its water supply from Marsal Lake, sixty miles away. It was excavated about twenty-seven years ago. The digging operations brought a number of elaborately ornamented brick pavements to light, remains, doubtless, of Sadarhadvana of saintly memory.

Now *barasingh* possess the wooded heights, and the deadly *guni*, and still more dreaded *porhu* lurk amid the undergrowth. The saints have passed on to the beatitude of Nirvana, leaving a material world to its loaves and fishes.

III

SRINAGAR TO ANANTNAG BY RIVER

THE average Kashmiri is so constituted that he cannot do anything without making a great deal of noise. This is particularly true of the *hanji*, or boatman, an amphibious being who, despite his constant immersion, manages to look singularly unwashed. His dominating passion appears to be for the sound of his own voice pitched at the highest possible key. No sooner is an order given him than he begins shouting to his mates. They reply in what sound to be tones of frenzied excitement. The women join in. Speedily a crying baby or two, and a number of barking dogs add to the din.

It was to an accompaniment of this kind that I started up stream from Srinagar early one warm Sunday afternoon in the latter part of September. My destination was Anantnag, forty-seven miles distant, better known by its unofficial Muhammadan name of Islamabad, the highest point at which the Jhelum is navigable. My boat was a *doonga*, a species of long canoe with a sloping rush roof, and rush mats for sides. These last rolled up at will, allowing an uninterrupted vista of bottle-green river winding, like a gigantic serpent, between banks of infinite variety. The narrow fore-part of the *doonga* formed a clear, though restricted deck space.

This Usguz, my big brown dog, would have liked to arrogate entirely to himself, it constituting an excellent vantage point from which to bark at all the other dogs, and their name was legion, that roamed the river bank. The mere sight of one in the extreme distance annoyed him intensely. Apparently, however, among dogs, as with men, there are some to whom a grievance is the spice of existence. Without a stimulus of the kind life would not be worth living. Occasionally Usguz would be compelled to relinquish his post in favour of two *hanjis* who paddled or poled in the intervals of towing. At such times he would join me where I lounged stretched out on a canvas chair on a species of small verandah curtained with white muslin. Behind was the dining saloon measuring about ten feet by five. Next came two diminutive cabins and, finally, a bathroom. The very prescribed space in the stern was sacred to the boatman and his family, some ten in number, a varying quantity of chickens and five fat ducks.

Regarding my relations with the proprietors of the *doonga* I can best express them as intimate without ever being familiar.

The description of my quarters would be incomplete without reference to certain unknown submarine depths beneath the floor. Here mysterious objects were stored out of sight if not out of mind. Now and again I would espy a black and yawning chasm where a couple of planks had been temporarily removed. At such times I wondered a little uneasily whether I were destined for the fate of Amy Robsart in Scott's Kenilworth.

The crew of the *doonga* consisted of Ahamdu,

the proprietor, a sinister-looking man in striking contrast to his son Subhana, a youth of considerable resource and tireless good humour, Ahamdu's wife, tall and thin and suckling a newly born infant, his daughter, a hefty maiden of fifteen summers, and three hired coolies. Then there was the cook-boat, likewise a *doonga* but on a lesser scale, and the *shikara*, a small boat for shooting and all minor excursions.

I was glad to get away from Srinagar. Every available mooring space along the banks was taken up. It was hot and the mosquitoes numerous. For a while the *hanjis* poled, pacing to and fro on the narrow deck. At Ram Munshi Bagh they took to the bank, towing the boat from there to Pandrethan, a distance of five and a half miles. At 4 p.m. we tied up to the right bank beneath the shade of a magnificent *chenar*, its trunk measuring thirty-one feet around. The bank was steep but the resourceful Subhana speedily cut a flight of steps to the level ground above. This was grass-grown and suggested an excellent camping site. In the middle distance showed the main road, white, dusty and winding. Crossing it I penetrated the twilight of a willow coppice. My feet sank in the spongy grass and clover. There was a subtle suggestion of mystery about the place. The densely-growing willows seemed a prelude, a kind of hall or ante-chamber leading to somewhere secret. Presently blue sky showed through the trees, and the clear golden sunlight of late afternoon. Leaving the shadow of the wood I emerged into a clearing, deeply sunk in the centre of which I sighted an ancient Kashmiri temple built a thousand years

ago to the honour of Siva, the third person of the Hindu *trimurti*. The old *mandar*, weather worn and grey, stands in a square tank, and is all that remains of the one-time metropolis of Kashmir, the original Srinagar.

Pandrethan, as the locality is now termed, is a corruption of Puranadhisthana, or the "Old Capital." This was destroyed by fire in the tenth century during the reign of King Abhimanju. The temple is the only building which escaped. Four centuries later, when Sikandar, the Iconoclast, was intent upon wrecking all the Hindu sanctuaries in Kashmir, this ancient *mandar* alone was spared. Ferishta ascribes its preservation to the fact that it was entirely surrounded by water and therefore difficult of access.

Crowned by a pyramidal roof the sanctum is eighteen feet square at the base. It consists of great chiselled blocks of limestone so accurately fitted and shaped as to need neither cement nor mortar. Each of its four sides is pierced by a doorway surmounted by a trefoil arch and a three-cornered panel, the latter carved with various deities, those on the western side being still well preserved. The interior contains a broken *lingam*-stand lying in the middle of the floor. Above this the ceiling is decorated with a central motif resembling a dahlia, and the figures of celestial nymphs.

The shrine was erected early in the tenth century A.D. by Meru, Prime Minister to King Partha. The tank is of much earlier date and was sacred to Naga worship, traces of which survive to this day in the veneration in which modern Kashmiris still hold

their springs, each of which had a *Nag*, or a snake for tutelary deity.

Now the tank is drained of water and is merely a swamp. Three tall *chenars* dominate its western bank. The foot of one supports a stone slab ornamented with the carved figure of a Maharaja plunged in pious meditation. Behind the temple the ground slopes up the mountain side bare of trees but strewn with the stone remains of the first Srinagar founded, according to tradition, by the great Buddhist Emperor Asoka in the third century B.C. Even as I stood looking down at a fluted pillar prone amid the débris, the setting sun fired the western sky with a glory of crimson and gold, burnished copper and glowing violet, a far-distant reflection of those flames, which licked up palace and temple, darting from house to house and street to street, until a whole city was devoured, and a king and his people rendered homeless there, where the evening shadows lengthened, on the lonely hillside.

Returning to the *doonga* I found some half dozen or more country boats tied up near by. Women were busy with pestle and mortar husking rice. Blue-grey smoke, hovering above each slanting rush roof, told of the evening meal in progress of preparation. Then there were bright scarlet patches where chillies were spread out to dry, together with sliced turnips, tomatoes and other vegetables in anticipation of the long, cold winter when, to quote Sir Walter Lawrence, the whole fair vale of Kashmir becomes a vast refrigerator. As I approached a tremendous hubbub suddenly arose. Women and children shrieked and men

brandished poles, laughing and shouting in their efforts to evict two snakes which had boarded their boat.

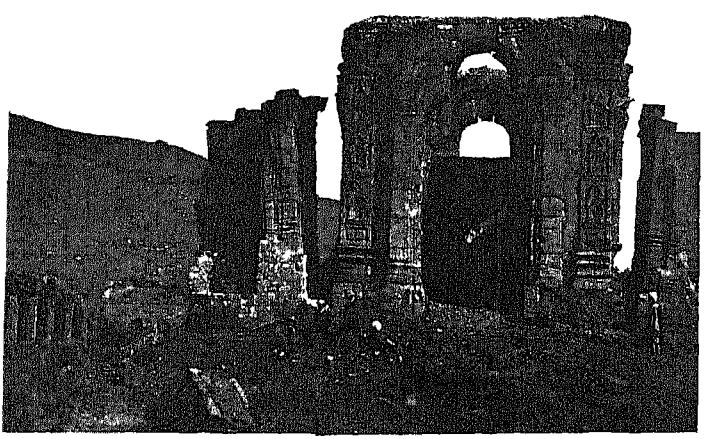
As a matter of fact recent heavy rains had caused a considerable rise in the Jhelum and had washed innumerable snakes out of their holes. These came swimming down stream with a quick writhing movement, the head held high and the forked tongue darting in all directions. They constantly essayed to board the *kishtis*. In this instance two had succeeded—hence the clamour. The intruders were ousted with difficulty and flung back into the river. One actually returned to the attack. It was speedily caught on a stick and thrown amid the branches of the great *chenar* beneath which I stood. From this it fell to be snatched up again and transported to the willow grove in front of the old grey temple. In this damp and congenial solitude it was ultimately deposited, a snake in the grass.

For all their conversion to the tenets of Islam most Kashmiris are averse to killing a snake. My Punjabi bearer had no such qualms. He broke the spines of four in an afternoon.

I remained at Pandrethan until the following Wednesday morning, when I resumed my journey up stream. For a while the right bank was grass-grown and topped with the rich purple red of *ganhar*, a tall and very conspicuous plant which attains a height of several feet and, from a distance, resembles cockscomb. Useful as well as ornamental, it is sown in May and requires neither irrigation nor manure. Left to the care of those good husbandmen, the sun and the rain, it yields an abundant harvest of minute grain late in September. First



VIEW FROM DULAI DAK BUNGALOW, LIDDUM VALLEY ROAD



MARTANDA, TEMPLE OF THE SUN, OLDEST BUILDING IN KASHMIR

parched and then ground, the grain is cooked in milk or water and eaten by Hindus on fast days. Kashmiris in general regard it as a heating food. The long stalks are utilized by dyers, who extract some kind of alkaline from the ashes.

A mile above Pandrethan the river curves round to Athwajan. Here a rocky spur of the mountains threatens to trespass unduly upon the poplar-lined road. As I passed a number of coolies were at work wearing down the projection by converting it into a quarry. Each man wore a thick ring of twisted rag about his head. This supported a pad fitted to the nape of the neck and shoulders, whereon he carried surprisingly large boulders with apparent ease to the fleet of waiting *kishtis* lined up along the bank.

Slightly further on, near Panta Chhok, a high wall of rough stone draws a square about a Muhammadan graveyard.

Near by stands a picturesque wooden *ziarat*, grass growing on the slanting roof, and the walls adorned with pierced wooden screens. This is the mausoleum of a local *Pir*, or Saint, and was erected by Haba Khotan, Queen-consort of Yusaf Chak, a merry pleasure-seeking monarch whose rule extended from 1578 until 1584. The love story of the royal couple was a romantic one. A peasant by birth, Haba Khotan was already a wife when her beauty and fine singing voice attracted the attention of the Kashmiri sovereign. Yielding to the wishes of her kingly suitor Haba Khotan divorced her husband, and thus exchanged a cottage for a palace.

Thereafter the mountains melted away. On

either side the banks showed flat and fringed with willow. A little more and the hills reappeared to the left, rugged and treeless but scantily patched with grass. In place of willows on the right bank of the river grew a tall, weedlike plant with a perfume resembling that of wild thyme. Known as *ganja* this is the exclusive property of the Maharaja, to whom it proves a considerable source of revenue. A severe penalty is imposed upon any unauthorized person found with it in his possession. The leaf yields a narcotic smoked in *hukas*. Particularly tough and resistant the stalks are converted into a rough kind of rope, much used by boatmen to fill in cracks between planks at the bottom of *kishtis* and render them watertight.

A little more and the *doonga* crossed to the left bank, there marked by a couple of two-storied cottages. So greatly does the Jhelum curve that at one time the compass pointed north and at another due south. At the village of Panchuk the hills again threatened to trespass upon the high road which here skirts the river. Masonry remains, on either bank, show where the old bridge spanned the Jhelum until washed away by flood. Willows, poplars and mulberry trees cast their green shadow along the edge, a study in water colours.

Ten miles from Srinagar lies the village of Simpore, a jumble of houses to catch an artist's eye. Next comes an island, long, narrow and fringed with willow. The afternoon was hot and still. The sun shone full on the river, a dazzling combination of gold and green. The boat made a gentle rippling sound conducive of drowsiness. Usguz lay, his muzzle resting on his paws, motionless as

the carved figure of a dog on a paper-weight. Lazily, between half-closed lids, I watched a house-boat drifting down stream. The scarlet geraniums on the roof had bloomed their last. The rose-coloured curtains had faded. Indisputable evidence that the season was over. Next came an ungainly raft composed of some scores of tree trunks, followed, closely, by several heavily-laden country boats. Amid much miscellaneous cargo I caught the familiar glint of the ubiquitous kerosene tin, its many uses and abuses eloquently expressed in the poet's lines : " Age cannot wither nor custom stale its infinite variety."

At four o'clock Subhana called out " Pampur " as though the *doonga* were a mail train. I opened my eyes, yawned and saw a large village gliding slowly past on the right bank. A little further on a ruined flight of stone steps, where a *dhobie* was industriously employed in dashing some clothing to pieces on a boulder, led up to a big white building of romantic aspect. At a considerable height from the ground its bare white walls were broken by a row of windows filled in with carved wooden screens, while, from above, a sloping grass-grown roof projected in a jealous effort at further concealment. It suggested an ideal abode for an enchanted princess. Subhana broke in upon my sentimental musings by informing me that it was the Maharaja's rest house. I felt distinctly annoyed with Subhana. His passion for imparting information was becoming a nuisance. " Where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise." But for his untimely interruption I might have been inspired to break into verse, an Oriental version of the Lady of

Shallot. In that mood, and at that moment I might have aspired to immortality. I ignored Subhana and glanced at my compass. It pointed south-west to an archaic wooden *kadl*, the Kashmiri for bridge, supported by three ponderous piers composed of stout beams, the interstices filled in with stones. From each pier a number of rafters radiated to support the superstructure which, by the way, looked none too secure. Despite its suggestion of extreme antiquity the *kadl* was erected in 1635 by command of Shah Jahan, most magnificent of Moghul Emperors.

Pampur is noted far and wide for its saffron fields. Once known as Padampur it was founded in the ninth century A.D. by the powerful Prime Minister Padma, uncle to the puppet king Cippata-Jayapida. A curious legend is told concerning the origin of saffron cultivation at Pampur during the previous reign. At that golden epoch a famous physician flourished in the neighbourhood. To him one day came a patient suffering from sore eyes. He essayed various remedies but in vain. The man grew worse instead of better. Greatly mystified by these repeated failures the physician at last enquired of his patient whether he were a mortal at all, for an ordinary mortal he most certainly was not. The other acknowledged that he was a *Nag*, or water spirit. This made diagnosis of his case easy. The specialist at once recognized that his trouble was caused by the poisonous vapours from his mouth. Accordingly he placed a bandage over the water god's eyes and the latter was speedily cured. When his sight was entirely restored the *Nag*, out of the fulness of his gratitude,

presented the physician with a single bulb of saffron directing that it should be placed in the ground at Pampur. The results achieved were so satisfactory that now, after a lapse of twelve centuries, seven miles of saffron fields testify to the water god's gratitude.

The industry rose to be a very profitable one until the great famine, when hunger drove the populace to devour the bulbs. Since then the process of reproduction has of necessity been slow, as it is three years before young plants can be set out in the small trench-enclosed beds, wherein saffron alone attains perfection. A sloping site and certain aspect are requisite conditions, moreover the earth must remain fallow for eight years. After the bulb has been transferred to the plot thus carefully prepared for its reception, it blooms without more trouble for fourteen years.

In mid-October the bare and somewhat uninteresting ground about Pampur bursts into sudden life and beauty. Fields of glowing purple fill the air with fragrance, cheating the senses with a brief illusion of the perfumed bliss of paradise. The work of stripping the earth of its violet-hued mantle proceeds rapidly. Formerly this was done under the jealous eye of the landlord, who farmed the territory out on terms as old as the water god's gift. The flowers were picked whole and placed in bags. They were taken to the landlord who retained half as his share. The cultivator then crossed to the left bank of the river where he disposed of his portion as he deemed best. The industry is said now to be a State monopoly.

The process of extracting the saffron is simple,

primitive methods having been retained. Sheets are spread on the earth near the fields. On these the flowers are placed to dry. Thereafter they are turned, shaken and put in water, when the petals float and the pistils sink. The petals are then removed, and the pistils collected in a muslin strainer. Their deep orange-red tips produce the Shahizafran, an imperial quality much in request by those Hindus wealthy enough to indulge in the luxury of so costly a pigment. The remainder of the stigmata yields a paler substance known as Megla and sold at a rupee the *tola*. Inferior grades are disposed of at prices ranging from twelve down to eight annas the *tola*. Considerable quantities are exported to Amritsar, the holy city of the Sikhs, and other religious centres in India. They command a ready market retailing at a good profit.

After tea I went for a stroll through the old town. The streets are narrow and the houses appear in the last stages of collapse. At a baker's Subhana called my attention to the noted Pampur *roti* known in local parlance as *kulcha*. He assured me it appealed greatly to the palate of all Sahibs. I allowed myself to be prevailed upon to taste the epicurean delicacy, a species of large round biscuit hard and thin, with a taste not unlike that of the celebrated Bath oliver. Following his lead I traversed a piece of waste ground, entered a square stone gateway characterized by the usual projecting roof, grass-grown and picturesque, and so up an alley between high stone walls. A second portal of the same type lay to right. This boasted a substantial wooden door. From its upper part

swung two metal chains caught in the middle with a round disc whereon was inscribed the name of Allah. Subhana volunteered the explanation that those who grasped the medal, prior to entering, could not be asked for alms. Rashly neglecting this wise precaution I crossed the threshold to find myself in a quadrangle containing a curious old building of cedar wood. The *masjid*, for such it was, dates from the fourteenth century. Square in form it is surmounted by two graduated roofs, grass-grown, with dangling pendant bell-shaped ornaments from the corners. I had frequently noted these peculiar decorations hanging on old Kashmiri buildings. Asking a *pandit* the why and the wherefore he suggested that, originally, they may have served as supporters for garlands of flowers on festal occasions. The mosque was topped by a diminutive *kiosh* from which soared a spire crowned with a gong-shaped erection terminating in a Buddhist *thi*. The façade displayed a three-storied balcony and triple window openings, one above the other, at either side of the door, filled in with pierced wooden screens. The interior was bare save for four plain wooden pillars and a few strips of matting on the earthen floor.

To the left of the alley yet another gateway admitted to a courtyard commanded by a square *Ziarat*, the tomb of Mir Muhammad Hamadani and a famous place of Moslem pilgrimage. The verandah is of deodar and the whitewashed wall decorated with frescoes in Persian style. A silken *purdah* hangs before the door behind which sleeps the *Pir*, or Saint. Kashmiris hold their mausolea in high esteem, venerating their pious dead to an

extent which has earned them the name of "Saint worshippers."

That night my boat lay tied up to the left bank, a little below Shahjahan's *kadl.* Every sound from the village opposite floated across with curious distinctness. The babies of Pampur seemed to have agreed upon a concert. They mostly cried in chorus with an occasional solo, or duet by way of variety. Their lung power was surprising and spoke well for the climate. After dinner I sat on my verandah watching Subhana fish with a piece of string and a baitless hook. The moonlight fell full upon the water transmuting it into a sheet of smoothest silver, excepting where the willows and *kishtis* cast black shadows along the right side. Gradually the crying of the babies and the barking of innumerable dogs died down, to be succeeded by a great peace.

Subhana was much concerned that no fish bit. He imagined that I was acutely disappointed. Therein he flattered me, crediting me with as youthful a heart as his own. In point of fact I had not anticipated that any fish would be so misguided as to rise to a baitless hook. He was still crouching motionless in the bows, when I exchanged the clear silver radiance of the moon for the dim yellow light of the small *chiragh* in my cabin. How long I had slept I know not when I awoke with a start, and the thrilling consciousness of a human presence. The curtain had been drawn aside noiselessly. No ghost could have stolen a more silent march. There stood Subhana his face wreathed in smiles, his whole attitude eloquent of modest triumph, a large and dripping fish in his hand.

As a matter of course that fish greeted me on the breakfast table next morning. I had dreamed as much. Fried a light golden brown it emitted a most appetizing fragrance: I glanced at the dish and then at my boy. He smiled in sympathy with my mood. "Subhana," he said, with a flash of white teeth, "Kashmiri no eat fish."

"Not eat fish, by Jove, with a river teeming with them. Misguided people!" It was a long time since I had tasted fish myself. Then, too, I had hunger, that best of sauce, as seasoning. Leisurely, with a feeling of pleasurable anticipation, I unfolded my napkin. Next poured myself out a cup of tea. Now for the fish. I took a mouthful and choked. Great Heavens! it was as though I had swallowed a packet of needles. Never had I imagined such bones, or so many of them. The monster actually bristled. It was as bad as a porcupine. I gulped down some scalding tea. "Leh jao," I shouted to the boy indicating the offending dish. Ten minutes later I solaced my wounded feelings with an omelette. Dull, perhaps, but safe. Kashmiris don't eat fish, don't they! Sensible people!

Another day of blue sky and golden sunshine. After leaving Pampur the *doonga* continued to hug the left bank of the wide winding river. The scene was singularly peaceful. For some time neither boats, floating logs nor people were sighted. Such trees as lined the water's edge were the usual willow, poplar and mulberry, varied by an occasional *chenar*. By the way the last-named, typical though it now seems of Kashmir, is said not to be indigenous, but to have been introduced by the

beauty-loving Moghul Emperors. If this be true the fair vale does indeed owe a debt to the House of Baber.

At 11 a.m. the small village of Kakapur came into view on the left bank. Here the Ramshi Nalla flows between densely growing willows to join issue with the Jhelum, their *shadi*, or wedding sanctified by the presence of a Hindu temple with a glittering silver spire. Next followed a somewhat uninteresting stretch. On either hand the landscape was flat, sandy and bare of vegetation with the exception of *ganja* and some dry grass. Cattle were grazing shepherded by two men and a woman, all wearing the national garment, the *pheran*, a species of long loose shirt, in their case dirt-stained a nondescript shade of grey. The woman had a piece of cotton on her head arranged as a shawl, while the men affected parti-coloured skull-caps. The cows were small and thin. Being sacred to Siva none may be slaughtered, hence intending visitors to Kashmir must reconcile themselves in advance to the prospect of a mutton diet.

On the right of the stream rose a high sandy tableland, one of those curious *udars* or *karewas*, which form a distinctive feature of the scenery. It was on these eminences that the earliest kings of Kashmir erected their capitals out of reach of invading floods. They are entirely lacking in irrigation, hence, as one of the monarchs in question surveyed his submerged territory, he may well have exclaimed with the Ancient Mariner, "water, water everywhere but not a drop to drink." This particular *udar* terminates at Latapore in a point marked by a few poor cottages. At a little distance

behind the village three grass-grown peaks extend in a line from north-east to south. Very soon Subhana waded knee-deep through the water to impart an interesting item of information. Half a mile inland, on the left bank, he assured me earnestly, was the Pantsal Jhil, where snipe were as plentiful as mosquitoes. I glanced at my broken left arm helpless in its sling. There are times when fortune showers her favours inopportunely. Suddenly, on the right bank, I caught sight of a small square building, roofless and set back some fifty yards from the river. "Jaubror," volunteered Subhana, oblivious of the fact that he was naming one of the most celebrated ruins in Kashmir.

About a mile higher up the Jhelum makes a sudden sharp bend to the south-east just before reaching Avantipura, now a village of thatched houses, a post office and a police station. A number of brown country boats were moored to the dusty brown bank from which they were barely distinguishable. A little further up willows fringed the water's edge and poplars rose, tall and slim and straight, in a green line against the misty blue of distant mountains that bound the horizon to south.

Despite the present modesty of its social and commercial status time was when Avantipura was the acknowledged capital of Kashmir.

Founded in the ninth century A.D. by King Avantivarman (855–883) the site enjoyed a reputation for sanctity long prior to that date under the name of Visvarkasara. Architectural evidences are not lacking to prove that it was formerly a place of considerable size and importance. Traces of walls, and the rubble foundations of numerous buildings,

show where the ancient metropolis flourished on the hillside behind the modern village. Landing at some steps, which can best be described as distinctly the worse for wear, a few paces brought me to the main road. Crossing this I came in sight of the celebrated ruins of Avantisvami. The temple has recently been made a protected monument and safeguarded by a wire fence. Mention of the sanctuary and of its founder, King Avantivarman, occurs in the "Rajataringini," in the following passage: "Having built there, before his accession to the throne, the Vishnu shrine of Avantisvami, that wise king after attaining sovereign power erected the Siva temple of Avantisvara." The latter is the old temple at Jaubror, about a mile down stream.

The credit of identifying the two sanctuaries belongs to General Sir Alexander Cunningham, pioneer of Indian archæology.

The famous remains of the Vishnu temple of Avantisvami lie to the east of the high road twenty feet below the present ground level. Excavations were commenced by the Durbar in 1914, in response to representations by Sir John Marshall, Director of Archæology in India. The work continued for two years, and has been productive of most interesting results, as well as treasure trove in the shape of coins and pottery.

At first glance I was forcibly struck by the classical appearance of the ruins. Seemingly they might have been transported from Greece or Rome. A closer inspection revealed striking differences, and yet the impression remained that the resemblance between the Aryan style of architecture and

that of classical Europe could not be entirely explained by the theory of coincidence.

Descending a steep bank to the excavated area I got a better and more imposing idea of the general plan. Eight stone steps lead up to the main gate flanked by broken stone pillars mounted on a plinth. These continue about all four sides of the quadrangular court. The entrance is of massive grey stone completely covered with a wealth of carved figures. The walls attain to a height of twenty feet three inches, but the pyramidal roof is gone, as are the trefoil arches and solid wooden doors. The bases of eight supporting columns remain, the two central pairs displaying twenty-four facets each. These are not fluted although they convey the impression of being so. The entrance is six feet six inches wide and admits to a double vestibule lined with carvings, and divided exactly across the middle by a raised threshold. The lintel is elaborately sculptured with birds and other forms.

The sanctum sanctorum occupies the centre of the court. It rests on a high platform built in three tiers, and is approached by seventeen steps. Nothing of it now remains but a confused mass of great stones. The cella has been completely wrecked together with the tall pointed roof. Four platforms of minor shrines still stand in the corners of the quadrangle. Near them figures of Vishnu were found beautifully carved and in an excellent state of preservation. These have been transferred to Lal Mandi, the State Museum at Srinagar. They present the second person of the Hindu Trimurti in the curious form peculiar to such statues in early Kashmiri temples. The *deva* is depicted

as four-faced. The central face is that of a man, to right of a lion, typifying the god's incarnation as Nara Simha, and to the left of a boar. Behind, on the nape of the neck, is a small demon face, with grinning teeth, tusks, protruding eyes, bristling brows and long hair bunched together in a big knot. So far the significance of this fourth face has not been satisfactorily explained.

In statues of this kind the *deva* wears a three-pointed diadem, his sole article of attire being a *dhoti*, encircled by a belt supporting a sword at the right side. A diamond on the breast represents the Srivasta.

Although now deeply sunken the temple must, originally, have commanded a view of the Vitasta, or Vyath, to give the Jhelum its Kashmiri name. The position of Avantivarman's city, between the river and the hills, which last draw a semi-circular screen on three sides behind, resembles that of the still older capital now known as Pandrethan.

In the time of the poet and historian Kalhana, author of the Rajataringini, or "River of Kings," the shrine was converted into a fortress by fugitives from the army of King Jayasimha (1128–1149). These took refuge behind its massive stone walls whence they defied the enemy.

Returning to the *shikara*, Subhana and two other *hanjis* plied their heart-shaped paddles with such good will that a few minutes brought us down stream to Jaubror. Here there is no attempt at a landing-stage. Scrambling up the bank I pushed my way through thorn bushes to the main road, east of which lies the ancient Siva temple of Avantisvara, built by King Avantivarman after his

accession. As in the earlier shrine the stone gateway faces the setting sun. It is smaller, however, and far less decorative. Approached by seven stairs it is characterized by twin vestibules divided by a raised step. Within is a quadrangular courtyard two hundred and one feet six inches from east to west, by a hundred and seventy-three feet ten inches from north to south. This was enclosed by eighty-six cells now represented by broken pillars, none of which stands higher than two feet.

The large central shrine is cruciform and has flights of steps corresponding to the four points of the compass. It rests upon a terrace fifty-seven feet four inches square, raised ten feet above the unpaved courtyard. A pile of broken stones is all that remains of the once imposing temple. This, and the sanctuary at Avantipura, were both wrecked, towards the close of the fourteenth century, by Sikandar (1389–1413) whose excesses, and ruthless destruction of Hindu shrines, gained him the unenviable sobriquet of Butchikin, or Iconoclast.

The much-quoted traveller, William Moorcroft, passed through Avantipura in 1823 on his journey from Srinagar to the source of the Jhelum at Vernag where, according to Kashmiri belief, Siva struck the ground with his trident causing the great river to gush forth. In Moorcroft's time the road lay nearer to the ridge, so that the temples were on the right of the highway instead of on the left, as now.

On Friday morning I resumed my passage up stream. Near Sethar, on the right of the river, the bank is bare and sandy. The only object of any interest is the telegraph office, a neat brick building whence flood warnings are despatched. Behind it

the white road puts in a brief appearance, its dusty glare softened by an avenue of poplars. It was early in the afternoon when the *doonga* came in sight of the confluence of the Vishnu with the Jhelum, regarded as a very sacred spot by Hindus, who have given it the appropriate name of Sangam, or Meeting Place. The tributary has its rise in Mount Kaunsarian Kuthar, also known as Vishnu Pad, one of the loftiest peaks of the Pir Panjal range.

At Sangam the landscape was green and well wooded. Exactly facing the mouth of the Vishnu the high right bank of the Jhelum is strengthened by a masonry wall seemingly intended as a support to a fine *chenar* just above. With his usual intelligence Subhana had discovered that although a broken arm might prevent my going in pursuit of *shikar*, it did not debar me from taking an interest in scenery and archæological remains. This being the case he was perpetually on the alert for something to show me. Now he appeared and requested me to land.

The sun was very hot, moreover it was that drowsy hour between tiffin and cha when all sensible people indulge in the charms of dolce far niente, and, possibly, a siesta. I felt strangely disinclined to sacrifice the shade of the verandah for the glare outside. Subhana, however, was persistent. In this he had the advantage of me, for he knew his own mind, whereas I wavered between two opinions —his and mine. Anxious for a respite I consulted the guide-book purchased before leaving Srinagar. On the whole it was a disappointing volume and singularly reticent on points whereon I craved

information. After much turning of pages I came upon the desired passage. It told me briefly that at Sangam the Vishnu flowed into the Jhelum. This was all. My curiosity was aroused. What had Subhana to show me the very existence of which was unknown to the learned compiler of the vade mecum? Without further protest I stepped into the waiting *shikara* and was paddled across to the right bank. Subhana led me to the big *chenar*. At its base stood a stone pedestal about a foot high. This supported a carved figure of Subramanniah, the war god, smeared with red paint and mounted on a peacock. The Hindu Mars was further depicted as having four heads and a corresponding numder of hands. The image was obviously of no great age, but it would have been needlessly unkind to have informed Subhana as much.

Some hundred and fifty yards higher up the *doonga* passed under a wooden bridge of eight piers erected by Maharaja Pratap Singh in 1910. Walnut trees grew on the right bank and a quantity of apricots. A row of poplars stood erect as though on sentry duty. Behind towered the mountains, greenish brown in the middle distance, hazy blue against the horizon, where they finally faded away amid piled-up banks of silvery clouds.

A few houses clustering amid willows, on the right of the stream, constituted the fishing village of Karpura. Further on a break in the trees allowed a glimpse of the thatched roofs of Marhom just visible above the green of particularly tall *ganhar*. Beyond again were some walnut trees.

The *doonga* glided past rice-fields. An old man, sickle in hand, looked like Father Time. Harvest

was in progress. Rice is the staple food of the country, and Kashmiris are expert at its cultivation, a matter of considerable labour owing to the need for constant weeding. Skill and experience are also necessary.

As the afternoon advanced the blue of the sky clouded over. The river immediately responded to this change of mood by turning, salamander-like, from dull green to yet duller grey. Its placid surface was ruffled by a gusty breeze laden with big raindrops. Subhana made haste to inform me that this particular reach of the river was frequently wind-swept. In confirmation of his words the few stunted trees on the banks grew all to one side, as though blown over that way and hence misshapen.

A small canoe-shaped island lifted itself out of the water. *Ganja* grew upon it, a few mulberry trees and some low bush. Next I sighted the high arid plateau of Tsakadar Udar. Its northern extremity commands the Jhelum and is accounted the site of the once-famous temple of Vishnu Chakradhara burnt to the ground in a tremendous conflagration, wherein several thousand people and an entire city were destroyed. Reading the chronicles of Kashmir it is curious to mark how the majority of national catastrophes were brought about by either fire or flood. Close to the *Udar* of tragic associations the river bends abruptly to the north-east. *Ganja* grows thickly on the right bank. To north the horizon is bounded by tall mountains, along the feet of which stretches yet another tableland, sandy and yellow, and devoid

of a single tree, or even a blade of grass. Subhana pointed out the village of Vagaham famed for the sacred spring of Hartakama.

Some fine *chenars* created a welcome diversion. Beyond them the Jhelum curved southward past a tree-embowered village, where some six or seven women and girls were hard at work preparing rice for the evening meal in great mortars. Each wielded a heavy wooden pestle, some four feet long, with a hollow space in the middle to allow the hand a better grip.

The little girls were very pretty with flower-like faces, their dark hair plaited in what appeared hundreds of tails artificially lengthened with black wool. Instead of the dingy shawls affected by their elders they wore brightly-coloured caps on their heads, bordered with gold braid, and having pearl ornaments dangling at the sides to simulate ear-rings.

In Kashmir women age rapidly. They work as hard as the men and are exposed to both extremes of heat and cold. Little wonder that the flower-like faces soon wither and lose their youthful beauty.

The scene was singularly bright and animated as the *doonga* neared Bijbehara, a town of very great antiquity, and one of the most sacred sites in Kashmir. Perched on the steep left bank the houses, high and crowded, looked down on the busy waterway through latticed shutters, of pierced walnut wood, carved in a hundred quaint and effective geometrical designs, occasionally enhanced by a touch of bright colour. Women and girls

stood, or bent in picturesque attitudes on the broken stone steps of the many *ghats*, each with her pitcher to fill. Others were busy beating dirty clothes on the stones and rinsing them in the still dirtier river. A wee maiden, wearing a gay cap of cherry and gold with dangling silver ear-flaps, carried astride on her left hip a naked brother only a size smaller than herself. Boys splashed about shouting and laughing in the enjoyment of their evening bath. Near the wooden bridge, built in 1631 by the Moghul Prince Dara Shikoh, a *doonga*, already laden to the water's edge with passengers, awaited 8 p.m. to start down stream to Srinagar, a distance of forty-one and a half miles by river and twenty-nine miles by road.

Above the bridge another flight of wide stone steps on the left bank was a scene of busy life. Further on clumps of white-plumed pampas put in a brief appearance beneath the screened windows of tall brick houses, grass growing on their mud roofs and an occasional carved wooden balcony projecting at a perilous angle from the topmost story.

My *doonga* was tied up to the right of the river within sight of a park of lordly *chenars* planted some three hundred years before by Prince Dara Shikoh. Exactly opposite a *ghat* of many stone stairs led to the silver-spired temple built, rather more than half a century ago, by Maharaja Ranbir Singh. This prince was son and successor to the Maharaja Gulab Singh of Jammu, to whom the British Government made over Kashmir for ever, as an independent province. The treaty stipulated that

he should pay an annual tribute of one horse, twelve perfect shawl goats and three pairs of Kashmir shawls.

Queen Victoria was in the habit of disposing of these tribute shawls as wedding presents by giving them to such of her Maids of Honour as got married. Those were the days when every woman of fashion aspired to a Kashmir shawl; and sighed for sloping shoulders that she might show it off to advantage. The vogue reached its height in Paris under the third Napoleon. Then came the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. French society was for the time being ruined, and the shawl industry, once such a source of wealth to Kashmir, received a blow from which it has never recovered.

The following day was a Hindu festival. The steps of the bathing *ghat* were crowded with devotees performing their ablutions before proceeding to worship in the Temple of Wisdom, its spire glittering with three graduated golden spheres surmounted by Siva's trident and flag. Brilliant colour was lent to the grey steps leading down to the green water, by the dresses of the women. Their *pherans* were in brightest shades of orange, emerald, royal blue, and ruby red, the loose sleeves turned back with wide white cuffs to match the white *saris* on their heads.

The lament is often heard that the people of India no longer dress in the picturesque colours of twenty years ago but affect sad and sordid neutral tints. Certainly that reproach could not have been urged on this occasion.

The shrine erected by Maharaja Ranbir Singh

commemorates the ancient temple of Vijayesvara, founded in prehistoric ages on the left bank of the river immediately below the present bridge. It was already a very ancient shrine in the time of Asoka 250 B.C. Before his conversion to Buddhism that Emperor is credited with having replaced the ruined stucco enclosure with walls of stone, and to have put up two lesser shrines known as Asokesvara. Referring to the sanctuary many centuries later Jonaraja relates how King Somadhova (1287–1301) held its *lingam* in such veneration that, in a single day, he expended a *lakh* of gold coins upon bathing it with milk.

The present temple is largely composed of materials taken from the ancient *mandir*. A small pavilion in front contains a stone figure of Nandi, the bull sacred to Siva. Other minor shrines display images of Vishnu and various *lingams*. The temple itself is raised upon a stone terrace. A statue of Siva rests against the back wall of the cella facing the door, while a group of eleven *lingams* occupies the centre of the floor. Everywhere were garlands of marigolds and scattered yellow petals. All the while worshippers were coming and going. To left a pilgrim was performing his devotions under the guidance of a priest. Near by another was having his head shaved in a particular way. Yet others stepped forward to smear the sacred emblem with saffron prior to making the sect marks between their brows. Amid all this *va et vient* I missed those beggars—the halt, the blind, the maimed—generally so much to the fore on similar occasions in Indian temples.

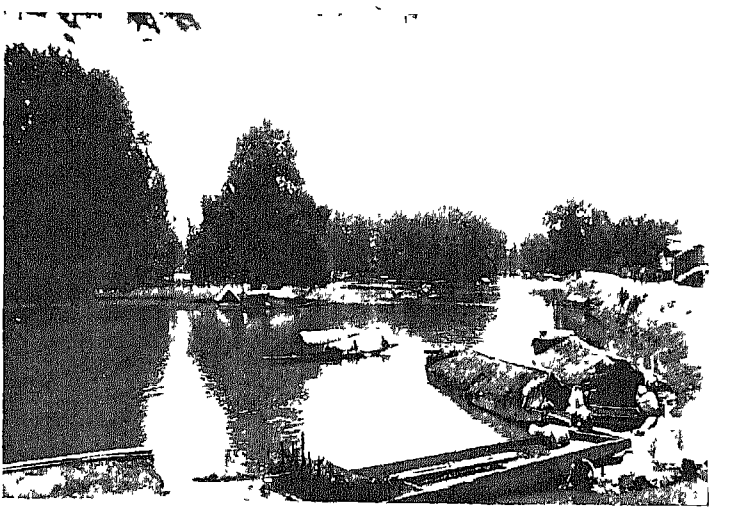


Photo P. J. Shoshee

CHILNAR BAGH

Hidden away amid trees is another *ghat* of old grey steps to south. Some reveal traces of ancient carving deeply cut and singularly well executed. In the immediate vicinity devotees clustered about a great *lingam* surmounted by a white flag. The encircling walls were inserted with variously shaped slabs whereon *devas* were carved. A glance sufficed to establish the extreme antiquity of the sculpture.

Leaving the shrines we emerged from the wood on to a good road. Subhana was eager to introduce me to an industry for which Bijbehara is famous throughout Kashmir. A walk of less than ten minutes brought us to a gate standing hospitably open. A couple of " pie " dogs had availed themselves of the invitation and were sniffing industriously about the courtyard. To right rose a tall house. To left, at a safe distance, for the dwelling in question looked about as stable as a house of cards, stood a shed. This contained a large pottery oven, wood-fed and circular in shape, divided into six compartments. Before each of these last squatted a man intent upon converting broken glass bottles into bangles. His only instruments were two iron skewers around which he twirled the glowing fragment until it was the requisite size and shape. I had noticed the boatwomen wearing a number of these bracelets and inquired the price. Three, I was informed, sold for six *pie*. Not exactly an industry at which rapidly to acquire a fortune.

Retracing my steps I next made a pilgrimage to the giant *chenar* in the park planted by Prince Dara Shikoh. This magnificent plane, the largest

tree in Kashmir, grows on the left bank of the Jhelum. Its trunk measures fifty-four feet in circumference. The root is protected by a circular platform enclosed by a stone curb some eighteen inches high. Moored close by was a large house-boat belonging to the British Resident, its size and colour aptly expressed in the title of "White Elephant." Numerous servants in scarlet uniform hovered about, ornamental if not useful. As we passed them Subhana informed me, in an impressive whisper, the "Lord Sahib." For the second time that day it was brought home to me that the world would be a much brighter place if only we realized the relative value of colours, and did not bind ourselves to sad and gloomy tints. Surely the tailor has been a great spoilsport in this respect. Why prefer the moth to the butterfly as a model? Reflections such as these engaged my attention while I was being paddled across to Prince Dara Shikoh's second park on the right bank. I landed near to where fragments of masonry marked the site of the old bridge. Here the *chenars* revealed their age by hollow trunks. Much of the ground was level and carpeted with a grassy lawn. It would have been an ideal spot for camping but for the fact that spring water is entirely lacking in the neighbourhood. On the land side every opening in the trees framed a glowing picture of yellow fields of maize and rice flooded in golden sunshine. Here and there reapers were at work gathering in the harvest. Standing, as I did, in the cool green shadow of the *chenars*, it was rather like watching a brilliantly illuminated stage from the obscurity

of the stalls. The dry bed of a square stone tank, and the massive walls of a *masjid* built with thin flat bricks testified to the piety of the ill-fated heir apparent to the Moghul throne, who here laid out his favourite summer pleasaunce in the splendid days when Shah Jahan was King.

About half a mile above Bijbehara the Jhelum begins to narrow, as it winds through flat country, sandy and bare but for the dusty green of *ganja* and the deep wine red of *ganhar*. The sky had again clouded over threatening rain.

Presently Subhana indicated the Garka Nalla. Near by, on the opposite bank of the Jhelum, he pointed towards a small village where, he explained, the inhabitants fish with nets and do not engage in any other occupation.

The river continued to twist and turn, growing ever narrower. Progress was impeded by a dense submarine growth of weed. Every few minutes the towing rope stuck fast. When jerked free it came up weighted with a thick fringe of green.

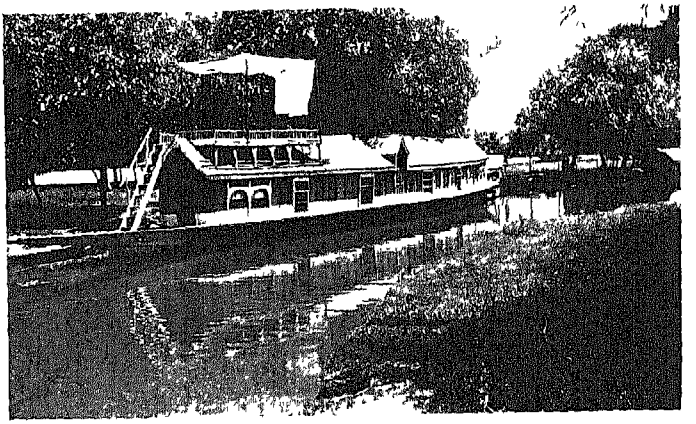
On the right bank the Liddar Nalla flowed into the Jhelum bringing as tribute the surplus drainage from the mountains south of the Upper Sind Valley. A little more and we came in sight of Khanbal bridge, built, in 1894, by Maharaja Pratap Singh. Passing under this we proceeded some eighty yards up stream, finally making fast to the left bank below some willows. Our nearest neighbours were two house-boats, their occupants absent in pursuit of *barasingh*. Across the river were some dozen *kishtis*. I might have wished for less noisy vis-à-vis and fewer crying babies, but one cannot have

everything one's own way in this world, and it is as well to realize the fact.

Khanbal is the port, if one may so express it, of Anantnag, being the highest point at which the Jhelum is navigable. The town of Anantnag is called after a stream in the vicinity accounted sacred. In 1664 the great Akbar changed its name to Islamabad out of compliment to Islam Khan, the Moghul Governor, who had pleased him by laying out a beautiful garden in the neighbourhood. Under Hindu rule the place reverted to its original designation. The result is that it is officially styled Anantnag but popularly referred to as Islamabad.

During the course of Sunday I had numerous visitors. First came the Kotwal, Kadra Joo, son and heir to Lassoo, the immortal possessor of over thirteen thousand *chits*. Strange to relate this man of letters could not read the first of the alphabet. As a soldier he had served under General Sir John Coke, commanding Coke's Rifles, at the storming of Delhi in 1857. Now his son has inherited his office of Kotwal and his *chits*.

Next came rival *gabbha* merchants. The first in the field spread his really magnificent embroideries over the deck. The other, not to be outdone, displayed his to even greater advantage on the bank. I began by vowing that, like the young man in the scriptures, I was already sorrowful because of my many possessions and that nothing would, or could, induce me to add to my burden. I ended by—but why give oneself away? Thereafter a vendor of carved and coloured toys came along. I invested in a whip for Usguz. His weight had increased



HOUSE BOAT IN NULLAH, CHENAR BAGH



THE BRITISH RESIDENTIAL QUARTER, TAKHT-I-SULAIMAN, SRINAGAR

by at least a stone since arriving in Kashmir and threatened to capsize the *doonga*, each time he precipitated himself in pursuit of a hornet. His activity was particularly exasperating at meal times. He was greatly pleased with the whip, regarding it as a new plaything until——

Torrential rain started at dawn on Monday. I had never before realized how damp a place a river really was. That day's experience enlightened me. Putting on an overcoat I scornfully, and a little precipitately, rejected Subhana's offer of a *kangri*, an earthen pot slightly larger than a tennis ball, filled with charcoal and encased in a wicker basket. Every Kashmiri possesses one of these, hugging it under his *pheran* as soon as the weather turns at all chilly.

By way of encouragement Subhana informed me of the Kashmiri belief that should it start raining on a Thursday it would continue for eight days.

"What about a Monday?" I enquired anxiously.

He looked stolid and did not reply. Evidently there was no proverb connected with Monday. That was some satisfaction.

The river rose higher and higher above the drooping willows. Looking down despondently upon the receding earth I wondered what Noah's feelings had been in a somewhat similar case. I had a damp tiffin and a still damper dinner, by which time the river had risen twelve feet. Telling my boy to spread a waterproof sheet over the bed I decided that it would be the warmest place. Sleep was out of the question. None of the *hanjis* as much as gave it a thought. I heard them shouting to one another above the swish of the rain and the

sullen swirl of the swollen river. Every now and again a floating log bumped violently against the *doonga*, or a rush of water caught it and partly swung it round. The cedar boards creaked and groaned straining to get free of the iron chain and crashing restively against the topmost branches of the willows.

IV

MARTAND AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

IN common with every other visitor to Kashmir I had heard much, and read more, concerning Martand, the world-famous ruin near Anantnag. Curiously enough this wealth of information left me rather confused in my ideas regarding a place which boasts the distinction of having been more often described than any other in the valley.

The first book I came across told me in no uncertain terms, and the clearest of type, that the shrine was built by Ramadeva, 3005–2936 B.C. The same monarch, I learnt, had erected a town in the neighbourhood known as Babul and a canal, familiar to antiquity by the name of Vahni.

It's a far cry from Lanka to Kashmir. I reflected, however, that when Rama conquered the island kingdom, and slew Ravana, the probabilities were that he appropriated the aerial car, wherein the ten-headed sovereign had been wont to pay flying visits to India. The theory pleased me, particularly as the site of Martand suggests a flying visit as pre-eminently appropriate. It was disconcerting to learn from another authority that the great temple of Martand was called "Pandukaru," or the "House built by Heroes." Bringing in the Pandus suggested the Mahabharata, whereas I had come to associate the shrine with the principal

dramatis personæ of the Ramayana. How reconcile the two?

The next three authors, whose pages I scanned in eager search of light on a dark subject, sought to persuade me that Martand was a comparatively modern structure erected as recently as the fifth century A.D. by the Kashmiri king Randitya, two of whose queens were responsible for the side chapels.

After the first shock I assimilated these facts with avidity. At last I had come upon the truth. It was convincing to find three people so absolutely agreed upon what was apparently a vexed question. Then a friend, anxious to be of help, sent me the works of a learned Sanskrit scholar. This last added to my perplexities by naming that popular national hero King Lalitaditya—A.D. 713–755—as founder of the sanctuary.

David wisely averred: "He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." For the future I shall confine myself to one authority upon a subject, taking care to avoid those writers who tantalize the unhappy reader by incessant footnotes, wherein he is referred to tomes long out of print, and only accessible to habitués of the British Museum Library.

It was two o'clock on an afternoon late in September when I started out to see the celebrated pile. Heavy rains had flooded much of the country, washing away bridges, and rendering the roads impassable for *tonga* traffic in many places. A broken bridle arm made it inadvisable for me to mount a pony, consequently I was faced with the alternative of walking, or of being carried in a

dhooli. The mud decided me in favour of the latter course as the lesser of two evils.

Half an hour before the appointed time eight stalwart coolies arrived with a decrepit-looking *dhooli*. Trusting that this was a case in which appearances were deceptive, and that it would prove capable of bearing my weight, I stepped in gingerly and sat down. Allowing me no leisure for further misgivings the men hoisted me up briskly and broke into a song, intended, no doubt, to drown certain ominous creakings and crackings. Soon they were wading through water, where the Jhelum had overflowed its left bank, submerged the road and temporarily converted the nearest orchard into a lake.

From Khanbal bridge the distance to Martand, or Matan as it is called locally, is about five miles. The route followed by the coolies led past Anantnag, the second largest city in Kashmir, familiarly known by the Muhammadan title of Islamabad conferred upon it by the great Akbar. Its distinctive features are narrow, winding streets, and high and very insecure-looking houses, pierced wooden screens lending an air of mystery to the windows. Grass grows on the slooping roofs, from the corners of which dangle curious bell-shaped ornaments of carved walnut. The majority of dwellings display small projecting balconies perched at a dizzy angle, and seemingly about to fall on the passers-by. The bazaar is of the familiar Indian type. There are vendors in plenty of carved and coloured wooden boxes, bowls and toys, *gabbha* merchants at work embroidering lengths of dark serge in the brightest of shades, and most elaborate

of designs, Kashmiri caps, their shape apparently inspired by the cup of an acorn, and butchers offering mutton for sale remarkable for fat as white as snow.

The coolies jogged on through mud and water, until they reached a picturesque village at the foot of the great *karewa*, or tableland whereon Martand is situated. This *karewa*, they informed me, is spoken of locally as Shakol. Some half a dozen houses composed the village, which lay to the left of the road. Scarlet patches on the slanting grass roofs showed where chillies were spread out to dry in the sun. More chillies hung in chains of vivid red from a screened window, and bright pink flowers bloomed in a row along the top of a low mud wall. Streams watered the village green threading their way amid the poplars. An ancient woman, in a shabby drab *pheran*, was tending a couple of goats, and a small boy, with a big stick, was making life miserable for a large grey-and-white dog.

The *dhooli* bearers struck to right up a steep winding track that scarred the precipitous side of the *karewa*. The ascent made, the eminence revealed itself a veritable tableland. Paddy fields stretched in all directions. Far off, to the north, a few poplar trees relieved the monotony.

It was very silent up there high above the rest of the world, very flat and isolated. Somehow I became conscious of a detached feeling. It was as though I suddenly found myself in another sphere. Surely it was some such mysterious cloudland that Jack the Giant-killer discovered when he climbed the beanstalk!

Vigne, who visited Kashmir in 1835, fell under the peculiar spell of the place. Writing of it he says: "A nobler race-course I have never seen, and as, in particular spots, it commands a beautiful view of the valley, I venture to prophecy that, in some future year, the races and cricket matches of Islamabad will be among the most celebrated in the East."

So far the noted traveller's prediction has not been verified. With the advent of the aeroplane, however, he may yet be proved a true prophet.

"Nadar Khan!" ejaculated one of the *dhooli* bearers at sight of a village enclosed by a mud wall, in the midst of poplars and willows. A number of small black cows, and sheep of the same sable hue testified to the prosperity of the community. Not long after we passed a few more houses. Those, I was informed, were collectively entitled Rampur. A quantity of roughly moulded mud bricks lay drying in the sun. Next we neared a scattered village, to left of which we plunged amid willows to emerge at a wire fence. Penetrating this barrier I found myself on gently rising ground. In front stretched an open space, grass grown, and commanding a vast expanse of Heaven above and wide-stretching earth below. Here, lonely, remote from either, rose the ruin of Martanda, the incomparable Temple of the Sun.

My first impression was of something very old. Surely Age was the presiding deity of the wrecked shrine, the jumble of great grey stones! Gradually the outlines of porch and pillar, trefoiled arch and central edifice, detached themselves, until the whole

grand pile stood out clearly defined against the blue sky.

The central gateway faces west and consists of massive stones built, as a child builds, with fitted blocks. Remains of carved figures testify to the wealth of sculptured detail wherewith every inch was adorned by skilful Hindu masons, in the days before sordid worship of the god Commerce dealt a death-blow at Art. The interior reveals a double vestibule divided by a raised step, and admits to a large quadrangle where, at the time of my visit, a cow, two calves and a pony were peacefully browsing on the short dry grass. About all four sides stretch remnants of pillared colonnades backed by trefoiled arches. The last are said to have framed eighty-four shrines, the mystic number arrived at by multiplying the signs of the Zodiac by the days of the week. Those to the north are in the best state of preservation. Apparently the centre of each wall was pierced by a gateway.

In the middle of the court stands a high carved platform supporting the temple. Broken steps lead up between handsome and very massive sloping side walls, to a tall portal of a graceful design characterized by a trefoil arch, and surmounted by a three-cornered panel. In the square hall four shallow-pointed shrines, sunk in the massive walls, frame as many big carved figures of deities, much mutilated. An inner trefoiled arch admits to the sanctum sanctorum, now bare but originally dedicated to Vishnu Surya, worshipped from time immemorial as Martanda, the Sun God, at the neighbouring sacred spring of

Bawan, about a mile to north-west at the foot of the tableland.

Mention of the shrine is made in the Rajatarangini, or River of Kings, the classical epic, by the poet Kalhana, to which posterity owes its knowledge of Kashmir from prehistoric times to the twelfth century. The information therein contained remained accessible only to a few until that indefatigable Sanskrit scholar, Sir Aurel Stein, gave the world at large an English translation.

The Rajatarangini ascribes the ancient fane to Lalitaditya (A.D. 713–755) in the following verse :—

"That liberal King built the wonderful shrine of Martanda, with its massive walls of stone within a lofty enclosure, and its town swelling with grapes."

The chronicles further describe a dramatic episode connected with the temple. It happened in the eleventh century. Feeling death approaching King Kalasa caused himself to be transported up stream, in the royal barge, from Bijbehara to Khanbal. Thence he was borne in a litter to the temple of Martand. Here he presented a statue of pure gold to the shrine. The gift did not effect his restoration to health, and so, finding all in vain, he commanded those about him to carry him into the innermost sanctuary, where he expired at the feet of the Sun God.

As I stood in the chill stone cella I pictured the dying king, his profitless gift of gold, the priests and courtiers, the flowers, the lights and tinkling bells. What stories the age-worn stones could tell if only walls had tongues as well as ears!

Later on, when Kalasa's son, King Harsa, stripped

the Kashmiri temples of their hoarded wealth, subjecting the sacred images to every conceivable indignity, he spared Martand. Its destruction is ascribed to Sikandar, the Iconoclast, in the fourteenth century. Earthquakes, too, are believed to have effected considerable damage.

The famous ruins are universally acknowledged the finest architectural remains in Kashmir. Additional interest centres in the fact that they are also claimed to be the oldest to which an authentic date can be ascribed. Many conjectures have been hazarded concerning them. General Cunningham suggested that, originally, the quadrangle was flooded with water in order to place the shrine more especially under the protection of the *Nagas*, or presiding deities of the springs. Fergusson objected to this on architectural grounds. As a matter of fact the *udar* is deficient in the matter of springs, and depends for its principal water supply upon a canal brought from the Lidar river. However beautiful and curious Martand may be on account of age, architecture and associations, there is no disputing that the temple owes its chief charm to the unique character of its site. This is unrivalled by that of any other celebrated edifice in the world.

The old sanctuary stands near the northern edge of the lofty alluvial tableland, commanding the fair vale of Kashmir. As far as the eye could range, on that autumn afternoon, the valley lay shimmering in the mellow sunshine. There were fields of maize and rice, orchards of rosy-cheeked apples, high-walled Moghul gardens, the varied green of willow, poplar, walnut, mulberry and *chenar;*

villages of grass-roofed houses; glittering silver spires rising above Hindu shrines, brown Muhammadan *ziarats*, and *masjids* of many roofs. Through it all, in and out amid the grass, the trees and the buildings to God and man, threaded the great green river, the holy Vitasta, at once the waterway and high road of Kashmir, while round about the mountains towered, faithful sentinels of the land.

The ground, in the immediate vicinity of the temple, is very uneven and suggests buried remains, and the romance of treasure trove.

Suddenly, for some unknown reason, a suspicion crossed my mind that the place was an ideal haunt for snakes. At that moment I was climbing up the ruins of the small side chapel outside the southern wall of the main shrine. Happening to glance down my eye was caught by the most perfect specimen of a snake skin that I have ever seen. It belonged to the venomous *guni*, and was of a greyish tint regularly marked with a diamond pattern in brown. The belly was horizontally ridged. I hurried down from the pile of stones to see a second skin, similar to the first and about eighteen inches long, lying on the grass.

At this juncture a tall old man, broad-shouldered and thin, made his appearance. He wore the customary dirty grey *pheran* and pointed skull-cap to match, and carried a stout stick. "A good many snakes here," I said indicating the skins.

He hastened to assure me that the place literally swarmed with *guni* and the still more dreaded *porhu*, a species which attacks its victims unawares, until cows had taken upon themselves to graze on the long grass within the enclosure. Since then the

number of snakes had greatly diminished, although some still lurked in holes amid the ruins.

Being launched upon a congenial theme the old Muhammadan kept up a flow of anecdote concerning *porhu* he had killed, and sahibs he had guided in quest of *shikar*. He knew, none better, where *barasingh* was to be found.

I took a final glance at the great carved stones. Bringing them up the steep cliff must have involved a colossal amount of labour. At last I passed under the massive portal of the outer gate. A little more and Martand would be but one of many memories. As such I still see it, an ancient grey fane deserted of gods and men, standing on the lonely *karewa* eternally scanning the western horizon for the splendour of the setting sun.

The old man had something to show. Leading northwards along the edge of a small stream, or ditch, the Shakol Nala according to him, he soon struck off to right, pausing before a diminutive building, low and square, its walls plastered with mud. From above projected a grass-grown roof. An iron chain, caught up in the middle with an inscribed metal disc, hung on the wooden door. Passing through the gate house we found ourselves in a species of court almost filled up with a walled inner enclosure. This held a well covered over with old carved slabs, probably spoils from the adjacent temple of Martand. The well, I learnt, was a prison, wherein the Angels Harut and Marut were held captive. The Ain-i-Akbari alludes to this legend in connection with the curious old shrine, so that it was evidently told to sightseers even in Akbar's day.

On the road back to Khanbal I stopped at Anantnaga, the sacred stream whence the town derives its Hindu name. The chief features of the *tirtha* are two tanks, connected by a channel, and literally swarming with fish. The situation is a romantic one at the foot of the great *karewa*, which stretches as far as the eye can see like a colossal rampart. Carved figures of deities adorn the four walls of the smaller tank, which is overlooked, on its northern bank, by a silver-spired temple.

As I was thinking of turning away I was greeted by the high priest. A glance sufficed to distinguish him as "Twice Born." His clearly-cut features were unmistakably Aryan, and wore a peevish expression, that somehow seemed accentuated by the saffron caste markings on his arched nose and intellectual forehead. He wore the usual *pheran* and skull-cap. Shouting to the coolies to remain outside he took me into the temple enclosure, and so round to the back, where an overpowering odour of sanctity, not of "Araby the blest," announced to my outraged nostrils the near vicinity of a sulphur spring. It was strong enough, and sufficiently unsavoury, to have made the fortune of a European Spa, in those dimly remembered prehistoric days "before the war."

I think he was gratified by the effect produced upon me by the spring. He unbent a little and looked less peevish. Pandit Pershad Ram was his name, he told me, and many celebrated people had visited the *tirtha* since he had been high priest. So saying he produced his book and showed me the signatures of Lord and Lady Hardinge. Thereafter he led me, ankle deep in mud, along the foot

of the *karewa*. Just as this mode of progress threatened to become irksome he turned to the right up a dirty lane, narrow and squalid, overlooked by the usual screened windows. Here he eventually paused before a deep walled enclosure, the far-famed Salaknag, a sulphur spring exercising a powerful influence upon the olfactory organs. I moved on hastily to yet another perfumed source, the Malaknag, sandwiched in between a *masjid* and a neighbouring house.

More generous than most celebrated show places Anantnag provides the visitor with sights and smells. If he is so fortunate as to be escorted by the High Priest he will conscientiously do the round of both.

Gala conditions prevailed on the day that I saw holy Bawan. It was the eve of an important Hindu festival, and religion, business and pleasure were attractively combined at the *tirtha*. All the Pandit world and his wife were bound, I discovered, for what is one of the most revered places of pilgrimage in Kashmir.

After leaving the town of Anantnag the road winds out into open country threading its willow-lined course amid rice fields. To right stretches the great *karewa*, its steep yellow side bare, excepting in a couple of places, where a few cedars attempt the ascent, their example emulated, a short distance further on, by some poplars and willows.

On this particular Saturday progress was slow, and occasionally difficult owing to the crowd of devotees. There were thousands of them. *Tongas* were filled to overflowing with gaily clad passengers, their *pherans* bright and varied as the hues of the

rainbow. Devotees on *tats* jostled devotees on foot. Some carried their bedding and cooking utensils, others their children. All the seven ages of man were represented. Immediately in front of my *tonga* rode a stately old lady. Her ample *pheran* was a rich ruby red, and her snowy white *sari* flowed about her shoulders gracefully. A servant walked ahead leading her pony by the bridle. So may some mediæval abbess have looked, ambling along on her palfrey on the Canterbury road, in Chaucer's day.

A diversion was created by the sudden appearance of some thirty ponies, coming from the opposite direction, laden with *kangris*. The old lady's *tat* backed into my *tonga*, which, in turn, backed into a collection of vehicles assembled in the rear. Pedestrians scattered as best they might, and a fat *banya*, mounted on a small nag, lost his balance, adding still further to the confusion.

All things have an end, even the longest procession. With my companions of the road I finally dismounted beneath the green shade of some lordly *chenars*, to the musical accompaniment of running water, as the sacred spring of Mattan, or Bawan, flowed into a large tank of clearest, most intense blue. In the background, like a high yellow wall, the *karewa* rose to meet the azure sky.

I was vaguely conscious of soft thick grass, of willows mirrored in a placid pool, of murmuring crystal streams, of hot sunshine, and of brightly dressed and jewelled pilgrims moving hither and thither in groups of vivid changing colour like patterns in a kaleidoscope.

A priest came towards me.

"Shakar Devi ka pahar!" he said, pointing to the blue depths of the tank.

I duly noted the name. He went on to tell me that it contained three different kinds of fish, *chirroo*, *kanto*, and *shush*. A couple of women came forward and threw in handfuls of roasted corn. Instantly the blue water deepened to brown as seething shoals of fish rose to the surface.

On the western bank a yellow canopy decked with marigolds formed a tent above a Yogi, his naked body smeared with ash. Numerous chains of wooden beads hung round his neck. His dyed hair looked like tow, and was wound in coils on the top of his head. He sat cross-legged and motionless, his sombre gaze fixed upon some smouldering sticks. Near him, but at a respectful distance, squatted a little man in yellow, an indescribable expression of low cunning on his face, as his small restless eyes followed the crowd, watching, marking and speculating. If ever I saw the "evil eye" it was then.

To the east lay a second tank of equally blue water fed by three streams. Tall elms grew on the eastern bank forming a green background for the white temple of Vishnu Surya, here worshipped as Martanda, the Sun God. An ancient legend connects the springs with the hatching of the sun from the lifeless egg, to which the wife of Kasyapa gave birth as her thirteenth child.

At certain seasons pilgrims resort to the *tirtha* for the express purpose of performing *shradh*, in memory of their deceased relatives.

The famous Bumzu caves are about a mile further along the foot of the *karewa*, and are regarded as

places of Hindu pilgrimage. The road is rough and stony. On the right it skirts the bare cliff, while on the left, in striking contrast, are winding streamlets, fringed with willow, and rice fields.

The *tonga* stopped near a walled vegetable garden opposite to where the ridge towered, rocky and precipitous. A small dark aperture showed about forty feet above the ground. To this I climbed along a ledge of rock, guided by a tall man, apparently the presiding genius of the place. At the entrance he paused to light a bundle of short pine sticks. This served as torch, and emitted a pleasant resinous odour in the damp, oppressive atmosphere of the interior. He led the way eastwards down a narrow passage. Great clammy drops dripped from the roof rendering the uneven floor very slippery. At times it was necessary to bend almost double. Presently the gallery split into a fork. Continuing to the left we came to a diminutive chamber marked by a slab. Here a Yogi dwelt for many years, until his spirit wearied of the dark and the damp, and made its escape out into the light, leaving some bones, and a few handfuls of ash as reminders of his long penance.

Retracing our steps we next followed the fork to the right. Gradually the atmosphere grew heavy with a musty, pungent odour. This intensified as we entered the small cave sacred to Kali Devi. Suddenly the air was alive with wings. They wheeled and circled about our heads flapping here, there and everywhere. Looking up I saw the roof corroded with what, at first glance, appeared age-long accumulations of soot, where dense rows of bats hung from the rock. The light of the pine

torch had disturbed several hundreds of them. Dreading what would happen if all should be aroused I turned and groped my way from the horrible place.

Round a bend in the road a small village came into sight clinging to the foot of the *karewa*. The poor, rudely-constructed dwellings commanded a view of rippling streamlets, poplars, willows and *chenars*, that a palace might well have envied. A steep and narrow alley ran up between houses and rocks to a shallow limestone cavern, its walls and ceiling smoke-begrimed. Some dozen *chattis*, and a potter's wheel testified to the cave-dweller's occupation. Near by a flight of roughly-hewn steps led to an aperture in the cliff about a hundred feet above the road. On the stout wooden door a notice was posted to the following effect: "The Priests of this place are only Pandit Mashiwar Kohl and Pandit Amarchand Kohl. Others do tease visitors for nothing." Personally my experience is that they tease them for something, and manage to make a fairly good livelihood from the practice. Both the *pandits* in charge welcomed me on the threshold of the large outer cave, guiding me across the rough, ascending floor to a small inner shrine, where a black Siva *Lingam* occupied the place of honour, smothered in marigolds. Holding aloft his pine torch the chief priest cast its light upon the ceiling, where I perceived a figure of the sun deeply-cut in the rock.

Once outside the sanctuary I paused to admire a really beautiful view of the Lidar valley, and the mountains beyond. The small village below contains a building of much historical interest. Now

plastered over and converted into a Muhammadan *ziarat*, it is the ancient Hindu temple erected by Bhima Saha, King of Kabul, maternal grandfather to Queen Didda the wife of the Kashmiri sovereign, Ksemagupta A.D. 950–958. The shrine was richly endowed. The Rajatarangini tells how, during the reign of King Kalasa (A.D. 1063–1069), a quarrel among the local community led to its being closed. When opened it was found that thieves had robbed the god of his silver armour. This discovery caused the temple to be again shut up. The occurrence was reported to King Harsa (A.D. 1089–1101) by his minister Lastadhara, who added : " Let, therefore, the treasures of this shrine, which cause the fear of theft, be taken away." The king, who was of extravagant tastes, acted upon the congenial advice " and found thereupon a treasury full of jewels, gold and other valuables."

The fact that such an amount of wealth lay hidden in a deserted sanctuary caused Harsa to reflect upon the riches concealed in the many flourishing temples throughout his domain. This excited his cupidity, and there is little doubt but that his find at Bumzu started him upon that career of plunder, in the course of which every shrine was stripped, with the exception of Martanda and one other.

It was on a Sunday morning that I drove out to the beautiful Moghul garden at Achabal famed for its springs. The village itself dates from remote antiquity, having been founded by Aksa, one of the early kings of Kashmir, after whom it was originally named Aksavala. The garden is said to have been planned by the celebrated Empress Nur Jahan, and

to have been a favourite resort of hers and of Jahangir's. The ground outside is much in request as a camping site.

A cascade of sparkling water dashes with musical roar over a masonry embankment in front of the pleasaunce. To right is a small gate-house approached by four steps. Passing through the narrow opening a path is reached. This follows the course of a stone water channel, until the latter flows beneath a large double-storied pavilion of picturesque design, to reappear on the other side whence it merges into a large central tank.

At either side of the canal stretch borders of brilliantly hued asters, emerald lawns, hedges of many-coloured cosmos and the greenest of orchards, the branches laden with pears and apples. In the middle rises a graceful summer-house, its walls and ceiling adorned with Persian paintings, grass growing on its wide gabled roof, whence dangle bell-shaped ornaments, and water flowing under its arched lower storey. The window openings are screened with pierced woodwork, so that it was probably a favourite haunt of ladies of the imperial harem. To right and left radiate stone-paved walks terminating in smaller kiosks of similar design. On the lawns are stone *chabutras* shaded by great *chenars*.

Steps lead up to a second terrace, likewise characterized by water channels, fountains, tanks and pavilions. At the back of the garden broken stairs lead through a ruined arch to a covered stone gallery. Above towers the steep hillside completely covered with the dark green of tall cedars.

A break in the south-west corner of the boundary wall admits to a wild grassy enclosure planted with trees. This is the trout hatchery, and contains fifteen tanks fed from a sparkling mountain stream that bubbles conveniently near. Each tank is protected by wire netting and a strip of blue cotton. A sharp shower drove me back into the garden. Here I sought shelter in the large central summer-house rising island-like from the tank. My boy spread a rug and unpacked the tiffin basket. Seating myself à la Moghul I prepared to negotiate a cold fowl, when a dignified figure, crowned by a snowy turban, approached and tendered me a wicker tray filled with small yellow pears and diminutive tomatoes. It was Samadh Khan, the head *mali*, well known to all visitors to Achabal. Presently he brought his book, a bulky volume wherein many noted personages have duly testified their appreciation of the incomparable garden and the gardener.

Samadh Khan stood, his shrewd, kindly eyes fixed earnestly upon me, as I turned the pages. Outside the splash of the raindrops mingled melodiously with the music of the streams, which gushed, crystal clear, from the dark heart of the cedar-clad mountain. The grey daylight filtered through the latticed windows softening the vivid orange, royal blue and emerald of the Persian ceiling to something infinitely harmonious. The small yellow pears tasted luscious as ambrosia.

The book weighed upon my knees and upon my spirits. Many were the poets who had visited Achabal and had told of its charms in rhyme. This, I felt uneasily, was the only possible mode of

expression. No ordinary prose could express pears such as grew in those enchanted orchards.

The music of the streams swelled louder and more rhythmic. If only I could catch the words of the water-god's song? Oh! for the gift of Hafiz!

Samadh Khan dipped the pen in the ink. It was time to write :—

Slumbering beneath the shade of *chenar* trees
There is a garden fair:
Of fruit and flowers rare,
Sweet apple, luscious pear:
Of running streams, and perfumed air,
And beauties quite beyond compare,
Where fresh delights are borne on every breeze.

Here Shah Jahangir wandered with his Queen,
Far from the many things,
Each crowded hour brings,
To fret and weary kings.
And here, though they have passed away,
The flowers bloom, the fountains play,
As fresh and fair as in their day I ween.

V

SRINAGAR TO MANASBAL LAKE

WHY move? The spot was in many respects an ideal one. Sunbeams danced upon the transparent waters of the Dal, sparkling and brilliant as diamonds. Willows bent forward from the bank contributing their cool green shade to the myriad hues reflected in the lake. Invading hosts of tall velvet-headed bulrushes advanced in serried formation, their rear guarded by poplars. Fields of great pink lotus flowers raised delicate rose-coloured chalices towards a sky of dazzling blue. Sunlight flooded the floating gardens and the two artificial islands, Rupalank and Sunalank (Golden Isle and Silver Isle) said to be creations of Zain-ul-Abdin (1423–74), the sovereign whose reign rendered the fifteenth century for ever glorious in the annals of Kashmir.

Now and again a splash and a ripple told of a dab-chick taking the water, or announced that a kingfisher had darted, with unerring aim, upon its prey. On three sides stretched the mountains, the gaunt peaks of the highest softened with fleecy white clouds, while to west and east rose those tireless sentinels Hariparbat and Takht-i-Sulaiman, the one crowned by a fortress and the other by an ancient shrine, fitting representatives of temporal and spiritual power.

Ancient tradition describes the former hill as a fragment of Mount Meru transported from that celestial abode by divine agency. Assuming the form of a Sarika bird, *i. e.* a *mina*, the goddess Durga flew thence with it in her beak. She deposited it on its present site the more effectually to close a gate into hell whereby the dreaded Daityas were wont to emerge on depredatory expeditions. The goddess then took up her abode on the eminence, where she was long worshipped as Sarika Devi, hence its early name of Sarika Parvata, now perverted into Hariparbat.

Regretfully I watched a *hanji* free the *doonga* from its moorings. Why is man so constituted that he only learns to appreciate his surroundings when bidding farewell to them?

A magical change passes over the waters of the lake as they dash down through the Dal Gate into Chenar Bagh. At one moment the *doonga* floated upon depths of crystal clearness, wherein the varied browns and greens of a densely growing submarine forest showed as distinctly as though viewed through the plate glass of a tank at an aquarium. A sudden swirl of waters, the shadow of massive grey masonry, and the boat shot through into a sluggish canal, opaque and yellowish green, flowing between high banks crowded with pleasure craft, to the Jhelum.

Kashmir is essentially a land of legends. The majority contain an element of historical truth which renders them instructive as well as merely interesting. One of the most picturesque attaches to the ancient embankment pierced by the Dal Gate. This old barrier is known as the Suth, a

corruption of the Sanskrit Setu, a dyke. Without it the lake would be subject to disastrous inundations every time that the Jhelum flooded. It was constructed by Pravasena II, a king to whom no accurate date can be assigned, although historical and numismatical evidence point to his having reigned in the middle of the fifth century A.D. When Pravasena II ascended the throne, his capital was the original Srinagar, founded by Asoka in the third century B.C. on the site now known as Pandrethan. Upon his return from a victorious expedition against neighbouring territories, a martial achievement described by the Rajatarangini as "the conquest of the world," Pravasena II decided to erect a new city which should bear his own name. Imbued with this ambition he set out alone one night hoping, through supernatural means, to discover an auspicious place and time for the founding of his capital. Accordingly he wandered along in the dark. The Rajatarangini tells how: "The host of the stars, reflected on the jewelled points of the king's diadem as he moved about, appeared like protecting mustard seeds."

After a walk of between four and five miles the monarch reached a stream bordering a burning ground. The flames from the funeral pyres gleamed through the trees and illuminated the water with dread radiance. As though this were not enough to strike terror to the stoutest heart a roaring demon appeared on the further bank with upraised arms. His countenance glowed with a fierce red light which enveloped the king as "the glare of meteors." Uttering a laugh, which waked echoes far and wide, the demon extended a deafening

invitation to the king to cross over to his side. As he spoke the demon stretched out his knee "and thus caused the waters of the Mahasarit to be parted by an embankment," the present dyke through which boats enter and leave the lake by Dal Gate.

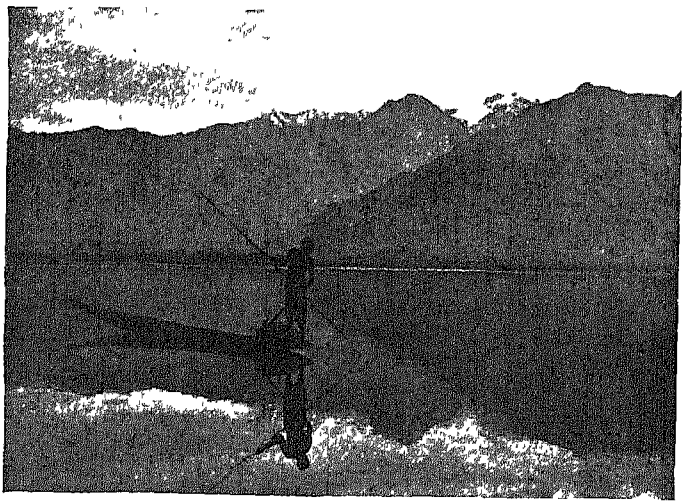
Undaunted by the demon's terrible voice and forbidding aspect Pravasena drew his sword, and, cutting into the flesh, hewed a flight of steps whereby he mounted the leg and safely bridged the stream. When he stood beside the demon, the latter addressed him in tones of thunder :—

"Build your town where to-morrow you see the measuring line laid down by me."

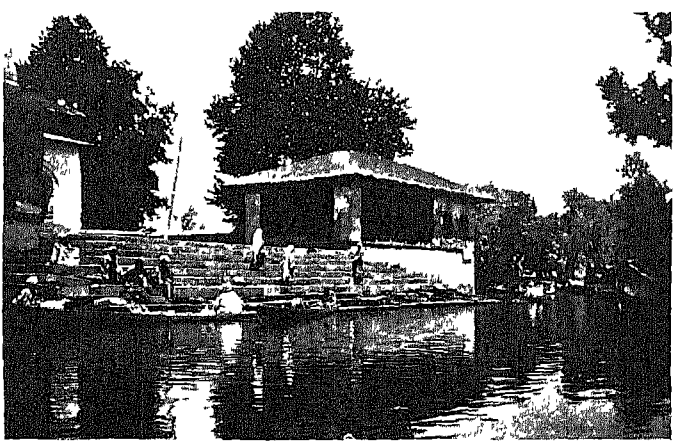
The king did as the *rakshasa* had bidden him. Soon a fair city sprang up on the right bank of the river famous as containing "thirty-six *lakhs* of houses." This was known as Pravasapara, a name which it seems to have borne for several hundred years. Gradually this appellation was abandoned for that of the older metropolis, Srinagar, the city of Sri, or Lakshmi, Goddess of Good Fortune.

Pravasena II built his capital practically in the centre of the valley, where the channel of the Jhelum is deepest, midway between Anantnag and Baramula. For the first part of its three-mile course through the metropolis the river flows in a fairly straight line northwards. Near Zaina Kadal, the fourth bridge, it sweeps round in a wide curve to the south-west.

The Rajataringini tells how, in the time of its founder, the city was the scene of a startling innovation in the shape of a bridge of boats. This was styled the Brhatsetu, or Great Bridge, the first of



SETTING FISH IN THE DAL, THE GREAT LAKE NEAR SRINAGAR



THE ZIAKAT AT KRAIYAK, THE DAL

its kind ever known in Kashmir. Apparently the earliest permanent bridge was erected in the fifteenth century by Zain-ul-Abdin, a wooden structure characterized by three spreading piers of deodar, the interstices filled in with stones. This still stands, and perpetuates its builder's name as the Zaina Kadal. In all probability it marks the site of the Brhatsetu of Pravasena II.

The immediate neighbourhood contains several noteworthy buildings. One, the Pathar Masjid, is the only typical Moghul mosque extant in Kashmir. Founded by the famous Empress Nur Jahan it is said that the stones for its construction were taken from the old Hindu stairway once leading to the summit of Takht-i-Sulaiman. A curious anecdote is told to explain the reason why the mosque has never been used. According to this the worshippers were assembled, and it was about to be consecrated in the presence of the Empress. Cries of admiration went up from the crowd, to whom the architectural style was unfamiliar. Remarks were passed concerning the costliness of such an edifice, and wonder expressed at the amount of money lavished upon it. When the Empress learnt what was being said she uttered a scornful laugh. Pointing to her jewelled slippers she cried, in the pride of her power and peerless beauty, "I spent more upon one of my shoes than I did upon building the entire mosque!"

Indignant at the words the congregation dispersed declaring that they refused to worship God in a house which a scornful woman boasted had cost less than one of her slippers. Immediately opposite the abandoned Pathar Masjid, on the

further side of the river, rises another celebrated mosque, that of Shah Hamadan, a Persian who emigrated to Kashmir in the fourteenth century and is credited with having converted the country of his adoption to the tenets of Islam. His shrine is a picturesque old building, grass growing on its spreading gabled roof, and its gilded spire glittering in the sunshine.

As it winds through the city the banks of the Jhelum are crowded with quaint old houses several storeys in height. Their very dilapidation is an added charm taken in conjunction with the elaborately carved wooden screens, which close most window openings, the projecting balconies and wooden casements, the sloping roofs, green with a wealth of weeds, the many *ghats* of broken stone steps and the variety of craft moored alongside. Every now and again the sunshine flashes more brightly as it strikes the silver spire of a Hindu temple. Somewhere amid the picturesque jumble of dwellings and sanctuaries, the dark narrow lanes thread their way to the ruined portal of the mighty temple, through the massive stone roof of which Pravasena II ascended bodily to the presence of Siva, while still clothed in this mortal coil. His wondering subjects watched the event, which produced a second sunrise in the sky. The Rajataringini concludes a graphic description of the marvel with the following verse : " At the temple of Pravasena, the place where the king obtained supernatural perfection, there is seen even to this day a gate which rivals the gate of Heaven."

Srinagar contains a shrine, the fame of which is known to lands where the name of Pravasena was

never heard. This is the fabled tomb of Christ. Referring to the strange rumour Dr. E. F. Neve makes the following statement in his book "Beyond the Pir Panjal": "There is a curious legend, invented by the founder of the heretical Muhammadan Quadiani sect, to the effect that an ancient grave in Kashmir, of a saint named Yuzasaf, who died in the fifteenth century, is really the grave of Christ, who did not die on the cross but escaped from the Holy Land to Kashmir. The legend, however, is not accepted by the Kashmiri Mussulmans."

Travelling down stream there is little need for the *hanjis* to do more than steer. This they do dexterously enough with their short heart-shaped paddles. Although reputed to be eighty yards wide, as it flows through the capital, the river was crowded with traffic on that hot September morning. In turn we passed heavily laden *bahts*, a living-house in the stern and vegetables drying on the rush roof, light *shikaras* gay with embroidered cushions and coloured canopies, house-boats with growing flowers in pots adorning the upper deck, and curtained windows that awakened memories of the Thames at Hampton Court; *doongas*, floating logs, State barges and open, crudely constructed *kishtis*, usually paddled by women, and piled high with dripping green fodder from the floating gardens of the Dal.

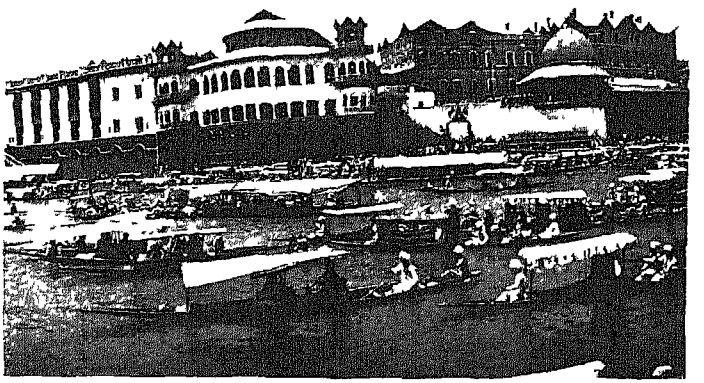
Soon Lal Mandi, the national museum, was left behind, then the State Hospital and finally Sher Garhi, the Maharaja's palace, an irregular pile that extends for some distance along the river front. It possesses little historical interest, being a com-

paratively modern building erected by the Dogra rulers of Kashmir on the site of the fortified residence occupied by the Pathan Governors. The effect, however, is bright and pleasing thanks to the red paint of the foundations, picked out with white to imitate brickwork, the row of tall white columns, and the large windows framed in yellow. Wide flights of grey stone steps run down to the water's edge, where the State barges are moored. Flocks of fat geese cackle contentedly under the royal windows, swimming thence to bask in the sun's rays below the glittering golden dome of the Maharaja's private temple.

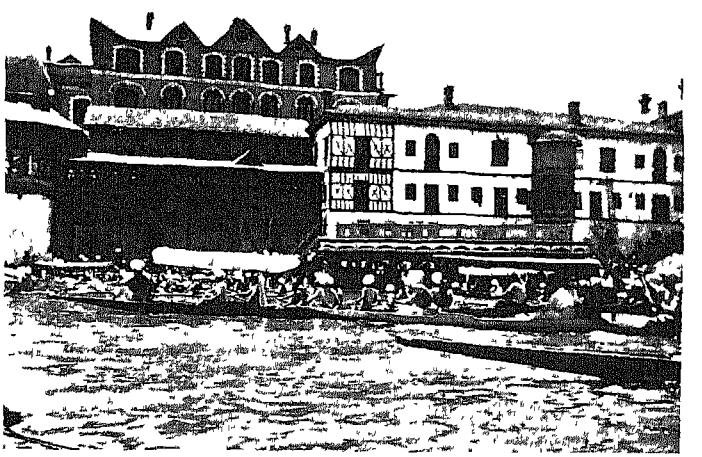
Dr. E. F. Neve describes how a rope used to stretch across the river connecting the palace with the stone *ghat* leading up to Basant Bagh. Petitions were attached to the rope and hauled over by court officials, who duly presented them to the ruler.

The site occupied by Sher Garhi is said to mark the line whereby the valley is cut into halves; divisions which have existed from time immemorial. Originally all the land above this barrier was known as Madavarajya, now contracted into Maraz, and that below as Kramarajya, the modern Kamraz.

As Pravasena built his capital on the right bank of the Jhelum it is safe to assume that his palace was on the opposite side to that occupied by the present royal residences. In an interesting passage the Rajatarangini tells how Ananta (A.D. 1029–63) abandoned the dwelling of the earlier kings and erected new quarters for himself near the Sadasive temple. This stood on the left bank of the great waterway near the present Habba



VIEW OF PALACE SHOWING ARRIVAL OF HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJAH OF KASHMIR AND JAMMU AT SRINAGAR



THE PALACE OF HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJAH OF KASHMIR AND JAMMU, ON THE OCCASION OF HIS STATE ENTRY INTO SRINAGAR

Kadal, or second bridge, said to have been constructed in the sixteenth century by Habib Shah. Elsewhere Bilhana mentions the great height of Ananta's palace, destined to be the scene of many tragic episodes in the history of the last Hindu sovereigns. Known as the " Palace of a Hundred Gates," it was ultimately destroyed by fire A.D. 1101 in the closing year of King Harsa's reign, seventeen of whose queens voluntarily perished in the flaming pile.

In the fifteenth century Zain-ul-Abdin, the Muhammadan monarch awarded credit for the major portion of the arts and industries, literature and architecture of modern Kashmir, erected a royal residence for himself in Srinagar. Mirza Haidar chronicles the event in the following terms : " Sultan Zain-ul-Abdin built himself a palace in the town, which, in the dialect of Kashmir, is called Rajdan. It has twelve storeys, some of which contain fifty rooms, halls and corridors. The whole of this lofty structure is built of wood."

Immediately below Sher Garhi we turned to the left. Passing under a foot-bridge, screened by high sides of green trellis-work climbed over by a picturesque tangle of flowering creeper, the *doonga* entered the canal known as Kut-i-Kul, one of the natural defences of the old city. Under its ancient name of Ksiptika it figures prominently in the annals of Kashmir. To the right of the stream lies the island whereon Ananta built his palace of " a hundred gates," the destruction of which marked the downfall and death of King Harsa, and the extinction of the dynasty.

Despite its royal and historical associations the immediate neighbourhood of the canal does not suggest that it is either a fashionable or an aristocratic quarter. Bordered by crumbling stone embankments, amid which may be distinguished an occasional carved slab, the spoils of an ancient Hindu temple, it is overlooked by decrepit old houses of such unstable aspect as to cause the spectator to marvel what would happen should he venture to climb to an upper storey? Trees lean far over as though desirous of catching their reflection in the thick green water which emits an unsavoury odour of garbage. The yellow heads of marigolds float past, votive offerings from some Hindu shrine.

Now and again a couple of washerwomen are seen on ruined steps beating clothes with short wooden bludgeons. They almost invariably wear dirty grey *pherans* and a quantity of silver jewellery. Their mode of procedure is more picturesque than sanitary; in fact, from first to last, the Kut-i-Kul appeals to the artistic rather than the hygienic sense. After making a detour of about a mile and a half the canal rejoins the Jhelum near the quaint old Safa Kadal. This, the last of Srinagar's seven bridges, a number which has persisted for at least five hundred years, is attributed to Saifdin Khan in the seventeenth century. Higher up, on the right bank, glitter the four silver spires of a large Hindu temple, one of the first objects to catch the eye of strangers when approaching the capital.

Lower down the river is barred by a weir. Boats pass through a lock to the left, a procedure which

generally spells a delay of about half an hour. Once out in the open again the *hanjis* discarded poles and paddles and towed the *doonga* down stream.

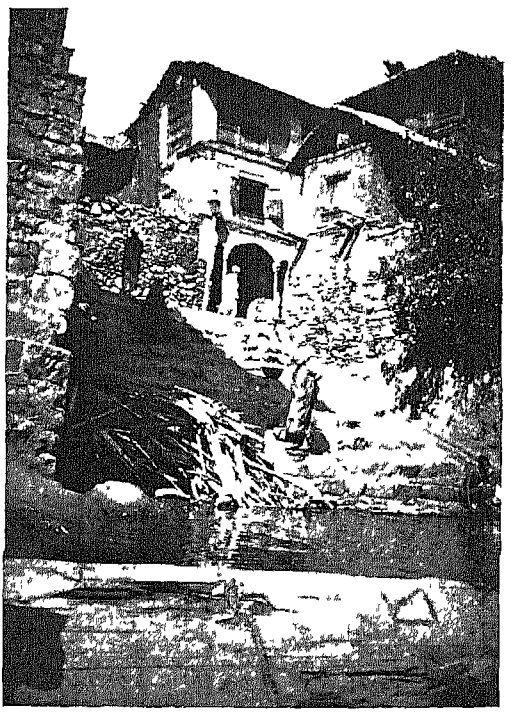
The scene was very peaceful. No sound was heard but the gentle rippling swirl made by the boat cutting through the sluggish green water. Occasionally voices drifted across from the bank, or my *hanjis* hailed a passing *kishti*, exchanging the latest news. All the craft managed to look picturesque whether the load happened to be stones or glistening fodder. A house-boat, curiously reminiscent of a Noah's ark, travelled slowly up stream. Three people sat on the small upper deck: a lady busy over some needlework, a young girl intently painting a pink lotus, and a gentleman reading. Floating weed, in plenty, drifted by, its curious crinkled leaves of vivid green, spread out flat upon the surface of the river. It would have been an idler's paradise but for the mosquitoes. These allowed "no rest for the wicked." They swarmed about the *doonga*, enveloping it with a cloud of wings. Although their monotonous "ping, ping" was only too similar, I fancied that they were less active than the familiar Indian variety, and their sting less venomous. What they lacked in quality, however, they more than made up for in quantity.

It was very hot in the middle of the day, and there was no need for hurry, accordingly I called a long halt for lunch. The sun was setting as we reached Shadipore, nine miles from Srinagar, the village overlooking the sacred confluence of the Vitasta (Jhelum) and Sindhu, the two largest

and most revered rivers in Kashmir. Their junction is considered no less holy than that of the Ganges, Jumna and fabled Saraswati at Allahabad. The spot where their waters mingle is called Prayag, and is marked by a small artificial island of solid masonry. This supports a platform of massive stone whereon a stately *chenar* tree casts a protecting shade over some black *lingams*. The Siva emblems are of varying sizes. All alike are smeared with red paint and powdered with the usual yellow marigold petals. Supernatural significance attaches to the *chenar* of which it is related that it has neither increased in size nor aged for several centuries, hence the superstitious regard in which it is held by the devout. Regular pilgrimages are made to the spot on certain *parvanas* throughout the year.

Despite its ancient tradition of sanctity the present site of the *tirtha* only dates back about a thousand years. The neighbouring village of Shadipore is of even more recent origin, having been founded by Sultan Shahab-ud-din (A.D. 1354–73).

During the ninth century the Jhelum was artificially diverted into its present channel under King Avantivarman (A.D. 855–83). The poet and historian Kalhana gives a graphic account of the great work. He commences by describing how agriculture was restricted by constant floods from the Mahapadma (Wular) Lake and the waterlogged condition of the valley in general. King Lalitaditya had made some attempts at drainage, but these reforms were neglected by his successors and famine prevailed. The land was in this parlous state when a poor woman, named Suyya,



A LANE IN SRINAGAR CITY FROM THE RIVER JHELUM

discovered an earthen vessel as she was sweeping up some débris in the road. Raising the lid she saw a beautiful male infant, with "eyes like lotus leaves," sucking his fingers. She adopted the foundling, who was henceforward known as Suyya. He developed into a prodigy of wisdom and became a teacher.

The engrossing topic at that epoch was the never-ending menace of flood. Each time the subject was mooted Suyya remarked that he knew of a remedy had he but the means of putting his project into execution. Eventually this boast was reported to King Avantivarman by one of his host of secret agents. Immediately all the courtiers exclaimed that it was the raving of a madman. Not so the king: he summoned Suyya and placed the royal treasure without reserve at his disposal. Suyya promptly helped himself liberally to "pots of money," loaded a boat with them and embarked upon his venture. At various submerged villages he flung handfuls of coin into the water, notably at Yaksadara, identified as a rocky spur encroaching upon the Jhelum about three miles below Baramula. Here, according to the old chronicles, great boulders and masses of stone had slipped down from the mountains, blocking the river which, forced back in its course, overflowed the surrounding country.

The starving villagers started energetically to work to recover the money. In their search for it they rolled aside the rocks, thus removing the obstruction, and allowing the pent-up water free passage. "Then the stream, flowing to the ocean,

set out in its course in haste, as if eagerly longing for the sea, after its detention ! "

Thereafter Suyya constructed a stone dam and strengthened the banks where necessary. In so doing he was probably the greatest benefactor that Kashmir has ever known. The result of his engineering operations was to divert the Jhelum to its present channel. As the ancient text expresses it : " The two great rivers the Sindhu and Vitasta, which formerly met near the temple of Vishnu flowing to the left and right of Trigrami, have to this day in the vicinity of the City (Srinagar) their confluence which Suyya first planned, and which will last to the end of the world."

That night the *doonga* remained tied up to the right bank of the Jhelum immediately above the village of Shadipur.

Early on the following morning I was attracted by the sound of singing. Landing at the narrow promontory, overlooking the marriage of the rivers, I strolled in the direction from which the voices came. Hundreds of small fish, rather like sprats, were spread out on the grass to dry, and emitted a powerful odour in the hot sunlight. Near by a couple of country boats were moored to the left bank of the Sindh. It was from the first of these that the music came. Eight or nine naked children, fat and appearing well nourished, were playing happily outside. As I approached, one of them ran to the boat and called out something. Immediately a man of about thirty emerged from the interior. He was closely followed

by a tall, powerfully built woman. Both wore the habitual dirty grey *pherans*.

Contrary to custom her head was bare, and, instead of being plaited, her long white hair fell loosely down her back. Both her eyes were clouded by cataract and her blank expression testified to a vacant mind. Her face wreathed in smiles she began to dance, moving her arms, and the upper part of her body with the grace of a young *nautch* girl. There was something pathetic, and at the same time repulsive in seeing an old woman, blind and mad, thus simulate the grace of youth. The effect was uncanny.

The man said something which one of my *hanjis* interpreted as meaning that preparations were being made for a wedding. At that particular moment the ceremony of unplaiting the bride's hair was in progress, hence the singing. I expressed a wish to see the bride. The man laughed good-humouredly and raised the rush flap of the *kishti*. Stooping down I peered in. It was a couple of moments before my eyes, dazzled by the brilliancy of the sunshine outside, grew accustomed to the inner darkness. The atmosphere was thick with charcoal smoke from a *kangri*. A small naked boy squatted on the floor sucking away at a raw fish. A group of crooning women, the majority with infants at the breast, clustered round a little girl of seven or eight, who was crying. The child wore the inevitable neutral tinted *pheran*, and a round cherry-coloured skull-cap edged with gold braid. Her soft dark hair, loosened from its multitudinous

plaits and artificial tails of black wool, fell straight and clean looking to her shoulders. I beckoned to her to come nearer. At this she was pushed gently forward. There she stood a shrinking, piteous little figure, tear-drops on her cheeks, her small oval face pretty but deeply pitted with small-pox. I sought to press a wedding present into the cold little hand, but the nerveless fingers had no grasp and it rolled to the ground.

In striking contrast to the dull green water of the Jhelum that of the Sindh is singularly clear and from a distance looks blue. The latter river is more than sixty miles in length and drains the greatest and most elevated portion of the mountain chain in the north. Pious tradition places its source at the sacred Ganga Lake on Mount Haramukh. As a matter of fact, it rises near the Zujila and Ambarnath Peaks. Its ancient name of Sindhu merely means river and is, therefore, identical with the original appellation of the Indus. This explains how old geographers fell into the error of confusing the two. Mention of the river is frequently made by early writers upon Kashmir, and it figures prominently in historical narratives. It is navigable for *doongas* as far as Ganderbal, a delightful camping-ground grass-grown and shaded by splendid *chenars*, within an amphitheatre of mountains amid which the sacred Haramukh towers 16,903 feet, eternally snow-capped.

Numerous legends cluster about the peak. Its ancient name Harmukta signifies Siva's diadem. The summit is accounted the favourite residence of the god. As such Kashmiri tradition avers that no human foot may make the ascent. Sir Aurel



PLATE 21

VIEW OF RIVER JHELUM FROM THIRD BRIDGE SRINAGAR

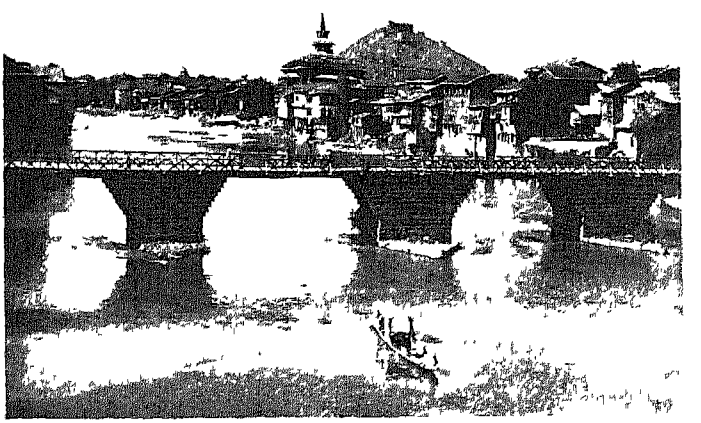


PLATE 22

THE THIRD BRIDGE SRINAGAR

Stein did so, whereupon orthodox Brahmans were unanimous in agreeing that he must have mistaken some other peak for the unapproachable Haramukh. Yet another superstition connected with the mountain is that no snake can bite anywhere in sight of it, thanks to the fabled vein of emerald running through it. As all Kashmiris know, the emerald is a potent talisman against poison.

At Ganderbal we tied up to the steep left bank of the river. The right is exclusively reserved for the Maharaja, who makes an annual pilgrimage to the neighbouring *tirtha* of Tullamulla, famed for its miraculous water. The Maharaja visits it at the J'eth festival held during the bright half of the moon in May and June.

No sooner was the *doonga* made fast than I started off in quest of letters. The nearest post office is in the little village of Mulshahi Bagh, adjoining the camping-ground. I was surprised to find the postmaster literally entrenched behind parcels of all sizes, sorts and shapes. These, he explained, contained merchandise, chiefly curios from Ladakh brought down by runners. I looked at them with interest. Here, no doubt, were yet more of the quaintly grotesque bowls, samovars, jugs and vases wherewith nimble-tongued vendors had sought to inundate me in Srinagar. The village of Ganderbal, he told me, was about a mile and a half distant, so that the correct designation of the camping-ground should be Mulshahi Bagh. He also assured me that so long as the road remained open a post left daily for Ladakh and Tibet. This information seemed suddenly to make these shadowy places seem very near and tangible. A little more

and it would be possible to speak to the Grand Lama over the telephone!

Leaving the bazaar, with its single narrow street and primitive shops, I emerged into the open country. Here a busy scene was being enacted on either side of a canal, which branches off to left of the Sindh. The small waterway was blocked with shallow draught country boats. On the banks women and girls were pounding rice. Men were sawing planks of wood, and children were playing. Riders galloped past balancing themselves on small sturdy *tats*. Near by were the picturesque ruins of an old stone bridge rumoured to have had twelve arches, and to have been the longest ever constructed in Kashmir. Whatever its ancient glories they have now departed. Its modern rival triumphantly spans the river a little higher up stream.

On the following morning I started off by *tonga* to visit Tullamulla, accounted one of the most sacred spots in the valley by reason of the supposed miraculous nature of its water. This is regarded as a manifestation of Maharajni, popularly known as Kir Bhawani, a form of *Durga* much invoked by Kashmiri Brahmans.

The way to the *tirtha* winds through picturesque country. Each turn commands fresh, and seemingly, more beautiful views of the encircling mountains. Cows were everywhere, small and black, watched over by boys in grey *pherans* and particoloured skull-caps. Across rice fields to a tree-embowered village of straggling irregular houses designed to charm the eye of an artist. A mud wall safeguarded an old Muhammadan *ziarat* of three graduated roofs, and little sharply-pointed

steeple. Near by the grass was strewn with Moslem graves, each marked by a coffin-shaped monument. Slightly further on several double-storeyed shops constituted the primitive bazaar, which was well patronized by flies. Tall red plants grew on the sloping roofs, and the upper floor projected over the lower. There was no window opening of any kind. The verandah, whereon the *dukandar* squatted amid his wares, was raised a foot or so above the ground.

Four youthful customers, in the shape of little girls adorned with bead necklaces, left off bargaining to gather about my *tonga* clamouring for *backsheesh* in the exasperating whine at which all are experts. A few *pice* only stimulated them to further vocal exertion. Apparently there was no limit to their demands.

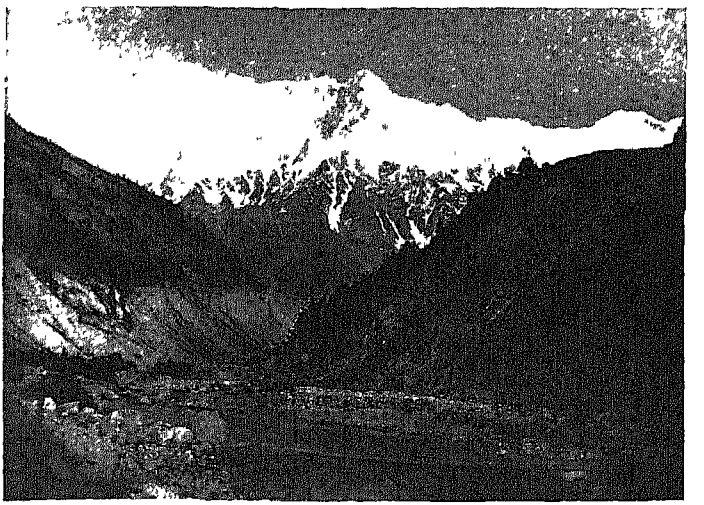
Within a stone's throw of the shops a very aged *chenar* grew in the centre of a round walled enclosure conspicuous for an inscription engraved on a tablet of slate. East of the tree stood a miniature *lingam* shrine, dome-shaped and so old that the plaster had almost completely peeled off, exposing a frame of small flat bricks. It sheltered there in the shadow, dark inscrutable and mysterious, beyond reach of the hot yellow sunshine irradiating the rest of the landscape with dazzling light.

A tree-fringed path led between two slimy streams to a bridge, then on again to a gate-house. On the threshold I was told to halt. Beyond lay holy ground. My boots were removed and a pair of particularly hard and uncomfortable slippers thrust on to my unwilling feet. Not being on penance bent I quickly kicked these off, and proceeded to

cross a somewhat shaky plank bridge to the sacred island formed by the Tullamulla stream, here about twenty feet wide wherein, during the reign of the sacrilegious King Jayapida, in the eighth century A.D., "a hundred Brahmans less one" sacrificed themselves that the *tirtha* might be spared. The island is inhabited exclusively by Brahmans and nothing is ever slaughtered upon it. Hindu pilgrims must observe a fast on the day of their visit.

Several *pandits*, wearing white turbans and dull red or dingy grey *pherans*, came forward to receive me. All had yellow and white caste markings between the brows.

A red iron railing enclosed a large and roughly-paved courtyard. In the centre reposed the mystical tank sacred to the milk goddess, here worshipped with offerings of sugar, rice, milk, flowers and lights. Its water is said to change colour according to the mood of the presiding deity. Sir Walter Lawrence described it as being of "a violet tint" on the day that he visited the *tirtha*, while Doctor E. F. Neve speaks of it as of "a dark blue colour." Common tradition avers that when cholera, or famine threatens the water turns black. I am disappointed not to have witnessed any of these phenomena. On the morning that I saw it the water was a thick yellowish-green. Yellow marigolds and majenta-hued asters floated on the surface. From the middle, island-like, rose a white marble platform supporting a small dome-shaped temple of white marble covered with elaborate carving and having a verandah in front. The cella contained two *lingams*, a large and a small, one draped with white and the other with red.



NUNGA PARBAT FROM RUPAI NULLAH



Photo R. J. Shorter

PEAKS FROM PANJTARNI, AMARNATH ROAD

Both displayed towering silver crowns and heavy necklaces of marigolds, while from the spire of the sanctuary two pennants, a white and a red, fluttered gaily above a glittering silver umbrella. Facing the shrine a couple of devotees were busy over their devotions on the bank. Lights burned in *ghi*-fed earthenware saucers beside them, and they sang what sounded strangely like a Gregorian chant, pausing, every now and again, to fling handfuls of marigolds into the tank.

The large quadrangular enclosure was lined with a variety of curious buildings and some trees. To west a pair of whitewashed shrines contained several black figures of *Durga*, and one of white marble. For nearest neighbour the goddess had a great scarlet Hanuman, the popular monkey god. Close to Rama's envoy a *sadhu* dwelt in a rude mud hut with projecting weed-grown roof. A high three-storeyed *dharamsala* stretched along part of the northern side, while the southern was utilised as a bazaar.

Apparently Tullamulla has been a place of pilgrimage from the earliest ages. Under the old Hindu kings its Brahmans wielded considerable power. The Rajataringini attributes King Jayapida's death to the displeasure of one of the Tullamulla Brahmans. This monarch flourished during the latter part of the eighth century. His reign was marked by confiscations of temple lands and treasures. "When he was appropriating Tulamulya he heard that a hundred Brahmans less one, had sought death in the water of that stream. Thereupon he desisted from confiscating Agraharas, but did by no means give up the land that he had

taken. Once the Brahmans residing at Tulamalya, struck by the hands of the doorkeepers, broke out in loud complaints before him at the time of the audience." The chronicles go on to relate how, in response, the wicked king mocked them and derided their powers. At this "the twice-born Ittila, a treasure of Brahmanical dignity," waxed wroth "resembling a snake, when it raises its head, and choking with fury," he spoke to the king. In no measured terms he threatened the royal sceptic with the terrors of Brahma's staff. The king only laughed the more, invoking the staff to fall on him then and there. At the words one of the golden poles, supporting the regal canopy, snapped and fell upon the king's leg. "In consequence of the wound his body decomposed through inflammation, and masses of worms had to be removed from it by the use of saws. After he had, for a number of nights, been made to feel pains which indicated his future torments in hell, life, eager to escape, passed from him."

On the whole it would seem only common prudence to placate the Brahmans of Tullamulla.

All too soon I was back in the broad Jhelum at Shadipur. As I neared the Prayag the sound of tomtoms and other musical instruments floated from the bank. The wedding was still in progress.

It was a breathless afternoon. Lazily the *doonga* pursued its course down stream escorted by a flying squadron of mosquitoes. Two islands were passed. The nearer one, on the left, looked like a great green cushion resting on the water. Some bushes and mulberry trees grew on one. Ripening

maize on the other. Mountains stretched in a long line to the right, tall and bare excepting for a few trees near the summit. Finally we tied up below Sumbal, a village of brown houses under thatched roofs, and a quaint old bridge with characteristic spreading piers of deodar. A quantity of country boats were moored to the left bank. Many were top heavy with loads of rush, from the surrounding *jhils*, for the manufacture of thatch and matting generally. The neighbourhood is a popular one for duck-shooting and for fishing.

Away to the left lies Sumbal Lake where, in the eighth century, Jayapida built his island capital. Regarding this city the Rajataringini tells a wonderful tale of how the Kashmiri sovereign despatched an envoy to Vibhishana, the virtuous demon appointed by Rama to rule over Ceylon, requesting the Cinghalese monarch to lend him five of his powerful *Rakshasas*, or demons. While crossing the sea the Kashmiri ambassador fell overboard and was swallowed by a fish. Being a man of resource he promptly destroyed the fish, made his escape and swam safely ashore. Vibhishana readily acceded to Jayapida's demand, whereupon the Kashmiri king filled a deep lake with the help of the *Rakshasas* and built the castle of Jeyapura, which equalled Heaven in beauty. The site is now marked by the village of Andarkoth.

Following the *hanji's* advice I left the *doonga* at Sumbal, proceeding to Manasbal in the small *shikara*. Less than half a mile below the larger village a few houses clustered on the right bank of the river. These bear the name of Nin Nara.

Here an unsuspected opening admits to a narrow and very shallow canal. Up this the boat was poled under the heart-shaped arch of a pointed stone bridge, largely composed of carved slabs from ancient Hindu temples. Evidently the masons were Muhammadan. Even the most upright gods were placed on their sides, while some occupied still more undignified positions. The banks of the canal were flat and bare with a few cattle grazing on stubble. In front the horizon was blocked by gaunt mountains, an occasional deodar growing on the higher peaks.

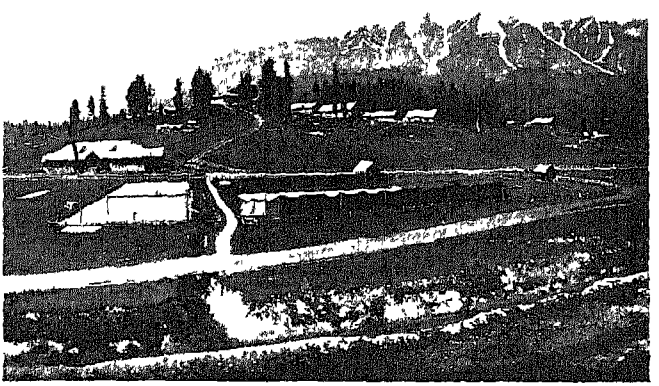
The *hanjis* raced along the bank, laughing and towing the boat at such a speed that the spray splashed up over the sides. At this rate we soon reached Manasbal, the deepest lake in Kashmir, and the clearest, most limpid water I have ever seen. Rather more than two miles long, and one wide, local tradition avers that it is unfathomable. The rocky basin has, however, been sounded and its depth registered as between 40 and 50 feet. Its name is derived from the sacred lake on Mount Kailasa, which the epics and *Puranas* locate in the Tibetan Highlands.

Soon the *hanjis* were paddling through great water-lilies, their huge leaves outspread in all directions. Some of the lotus were tall, heavy-headed as peonies, and of a beautiful rose colour. Others were small and white, and floated flat upon the water. Away to the south-east, the picturesque old *ziarat* of Haji Hilla thrust its small central steeple and brown gabled roof above the surrounding willows.



In old Scotch

HUTS AT GUIMARG



CLUB AND TENNIS COURTS AT GUIMARG

Presently the *shikara* mowed down the last tall pink lily and shot through into clear water of glass-like transparency. Deep below was a mysterious submarine forest. Here, no doubt, the *Nagas*, guardian spirits of Kashmir, have their dwelling. Suddenly the water turned opaque, the clouded green of Chinese jade. A little more and it again sparkled in the sunlight with the transparency of a diamond of the first water. To left rose terrace upon terrace of massive buff-coloured walls, ruined bastions at the corners. Poplars mounted guard with lesser trees along the ramparts of the sixteenth-century pleasaunce, which Shah Jahangir planned for his beautiful, and beauty-loving Empress, the Light of the World.

Landing where the rushes grew most thickly I scrambled up the bank to a gaping hole in the masonry, once a postern gate. A narrow path led up between crumbling walls and under a broken arch to a couple of cottages. Here, in an orchard of apple, walnut and mulberry trees a very old man came forward and gave me some nuts and fruit. He and his son rule supreme in the gardens where an Emperor and his Queen sought to make another paradise on the bank of the enchanted lake.

Returning to the boat I was paddled past the village of Kondabal. There the lake is fringed with willows and poplars which grow at the foot of a bare mountain of a mellow pinky hue. Quarrying for gypsum was in progress and had scooped a great hole in the hillside as though in a gigantic cheese.

We landed further down on the opposite bank

close to an empty house-boat. Its occupants, I was told, were absent hunting bear. Not far off was a lonely cottage facing a small square building said to be a *ziarat*. At this point a tall woman appeared carrying a pine torch. Following her lead I entered a dark passage in the mountain side. Soon it grew so low that I had to bend double and almost crawl. It terminated at a small cave, some seventy feet from the light of day, where dwelt the fakir Ahmed Shah. It is some slight consolation to know that his body now lies in a grave outside, where the sun shines upon it and the grass and iris grow.

For lunch I climbed to a level green space shaded by eight fine *chenars*. Behind flowed the narrow canal constructed by Zain-ul-Abdin, uniting Manasbal Lake with the Sindh river near Ganderbal. A bridle path follows the same direction. I was returning to the *shikara* when my eye was caught by a massive grey roof protruding above the reeds lining the lake side. The unexpected sight aroused my curiosity. Making my way across the swamp I came to a curious pyramidal edifice composed of two massive stones, one above the other, rising to a point capped by a broken ball. On the western side, looking on to the lake, the upper part of a trefoiled arch was visible below a three-cornered pediment whereon gods were carved. I thrust my stick down into the mud as far as it could go, but it still struck against the stone. A spring of water flows here converting all the ground into marsh. Is the mysterious roof merely that of a miniature shrine, or does it cover a large temple of some early king? Do its foundations penetrate

far below the swamp? Is its buried cella a treasure-house of gold and silver figures, heavy jewels, uncut gems, silver armour, and all the curious and precious things, wherewith the great of the earth sought to propitiate powers greater than they and, seemingly, as trivial minded?

VI

POONA TO AHMEDNAGAR BY ROAD

ADVENTURE, or its possibility, appeals to most of us, hence the attraction for a motorist of an unknown road, particularly when added zest is lent by the fact of driving a strange car. Both these circumstances combined to invest my recent run to Ahmednagar with that element of uncertainty so stimulating to interest. Of the car—a 1914 Darracq—I knew little or nothing, and of the road less. Prepared for emergencies I started in that comfortable frame of mind induced by the possession of a couple of new spare tyres.

It was 8.30 on a Sunday morning when I turned into Bund Road. A Sabbath calm pervaded the Council House, a grey stone building, large and square, topped by a central tower and extended its benign influence to the railway bridge, not usually accounted a quiet spot. To left a signboard pointed invitingly to the Connaught Boat Club. Slightly further on an unexpected breeze, as though from a punkah, signalled the coolest place in Poona, an open square overlooking the Bund. Here the newly-united Mutha-Mula rivers dash with a refreshing roar over the weir constructed by Sir

Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy in the middle of last century, with "the noble and philanthropic design," as engraved tablets record in English, Urdu and Marathi, "of furnishing to the inhabitants of Poona a never-failing supply of pure water."

Parsis testify their lasting appreciation of their countryman's good work by assembling at his Bund every evening, in carriages and motors, their ladies wandering in the neighbouring garden arrayed in *saris* bright and varied as the flowers themselves.

Deccan College Road skirts the opposite bank of the river, at the foot of a low brown ridge up which stone steps lead to the Hindu Temple of Yeravda, a rock-cut Siva shrine. On the tableland behind wrestling matches draw large crowds on occasions of special festival. A little to south-east, overhanging the water, is a hillock crowned by a white sanctuary, the tomb of Shah Daulah, a Muhammadan Saint.

A sharp turn to the left over Fitzgerald Bridge, then to right along the Ahmednagar Road, sparingly shaded with banyan and *kikar* trees. Soon a backward glance revealed little of smoke-veiled Poona but a misty haze. Beyond again an irregular line of dim blue mountains faded away against the horizon. On either hand the country stretched khaki-coloured and flat, excepting for an occasional isolated hill, a few cactus and some *kikar* trees, the last-named here known as *babul* and valued as making excellent charcoal. To right a long stone wall, its scalloped top bristling with broken glass, bounded the gardens surrounding the high blue and white palace of the Aga Khan. Curiously enough,

in view of this formidable barrier, not even a wire fence safeguarded the other three sides of the estate.

Thereafter the road pursued a winding course through black cotton soil. Such grass as grew was of poor quality, and was frequently strewn with dark boulders and fragments of rock. Near the sixth milestone welcome shade was afforded by an avenue of tamarind, *nim* and banyan trees varied by an occasional mango. Herds of young bullocks arrogated the highway to themselves, and evinced a decided aversion to making room for the car. Some carried resentment so far as to threaten to charge. To left a Hindu temple was remarkable for the carving lavished upon its spire. Near by a big stone figure of Nandi, the bull sacred to Siva, gazed down into the placid water of a large tank, and an old village, of tumble-down houses, sought to conceal its age and decrepitude behind a broken wall. At rare intervals a bright patch of tall green sugar-cane struck a note of vivid colour, or the pale yellow of ripening barley afforded further relief from the all-pervading khaki.

Thirteen miles from Poona a signboard on the right indicated Loni Bungalow. Clean and inviting, with its bright red roof and glistening white-washed walls, it stood in open country commanding a wide view of flat fields of oil-producing *kurdi,* or safflower much cultivated in the cotton soil of the Deccan. Newly harvested it lay in neat sheaves of what looked like crisp yellow thistles ranged in rows, each sheaf equidistant and weighted with stones. Resplendent in a new *puggari* of sugar-stick pink the caretaker emerged, key in hand,

from the bungalow followed by a train of lesser dignitaries.

Appearances are deceptive. Loni, which promised so well, was a case in point. For all its attractive exterior, its vermilion roof and snowy walls, the bungalow sheltered three rooms bare as Mother Hubbard's cupboard. True it boasted four tables, but it was an empty boast, for there was only one chair and of beds, and other conveniences, none at all.

"Kis waste?" I enquired fixing the pink *puggari* with a stern gaze. Its wearer remained unresponsive. Enough that he was there. It was not for him to justify dak bungalows in general, or this one in particular.

A little further up the main road a signboard on the left pointed along a treeless track to Wadu and Padl. Near the fifteenth milestone the highway split into a fork. Keeping to the right I soon reached a broad side-path leading to a large square enclosed by a masonry wall on three sides, and an iron railing on the fourth. From the centre rose a tall grey-stone obelisk of imposing dimensions and Egyptian design. A number of bullock carts were drawn up in the shade of some trees outside the iron gate to west.

"Kya hai?" I asked the wearer of a red *puggari*.

"Coregaum," he said eagerly and ran to open the gate.

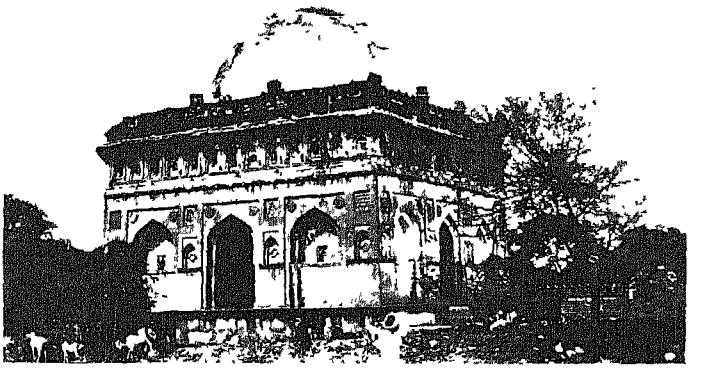
I followed slowly. Coregaum is hallowed ground.

On the western face of the monument is a white marble tablet bearing the following inscription: "This column is erected to commemorate the defence of Coregaum by a detachment commanded

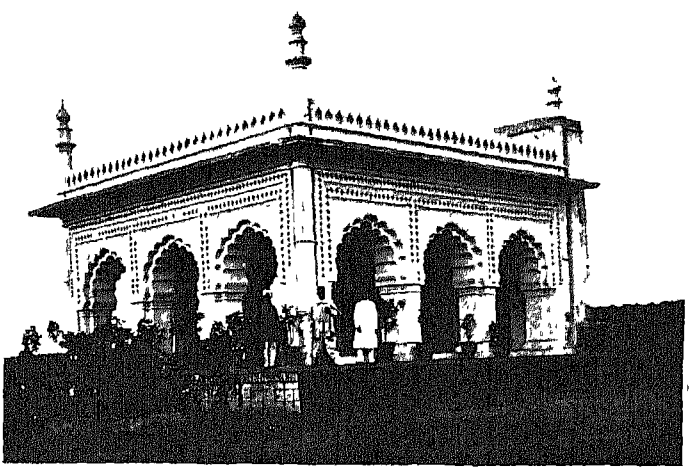
by Captain Staunton of the Bombay Establishment, which was surrounded on January 1, 1818, by the Peishwa's whole army under his personal command, and withstood throughout the day a series of the most obstinate and sanguinary assaults of his best troops. Captain Staunton, under the most appalling circumstances, persevered in his desperate resistance, and seconded by the unconquerable spirit of his detachment at length achieved the signal discomfiture of the enemy, and accomplished one of the proudest triumphs of the British Army in the East. To perpetuate the heroic firmness and devotion to which it owes the glory of the day, the British Government has directed the names of their corps, and of the killed to be inscribed on this monument. 1822."

A similar marble tablet, on the north side, repeats the inscription in Marathi, a third, to east, giving the corps and the European officers engaged, in addition to a list of those who fell. The force consisted of a detachment of Madras Artillery, the 2nd Battalion of the 1st Regiment of Bombay Native Infantry, and the Poona Auxiliary Horse.

To east, outside the enclosure, is a small gaily-coloured Hindu temple. A little further on the Bhima is spanned by the Fitzgibbon Bridge, a handsome grey stone structure completed in 1914 at a cost of Rs. 252,338. An unexpected feature is the introduction of small obelisks, reproductions in miniature of the celebrated monument. Four of these line the high parapet at either hand, constituting the bridge a further memorial to the brave men who wrote Coregaum in letters of blood on Britain's roll of honour.



TOMB OF AHMED SHAH FOUNDER OF THE NIZAM SHAHI DYNASTY IN THE 15TH CENTURY BUILDER OF THE FORT AND CITY OF AHMEDNAGAR



MASJID FACING GARDEN WHEREIN AURANZIB SHAH DIED AT AHMEDNAGAR

On the morning that I crossed it the river had contracted to a mere stream. A few bullocks, seemingly carved out of black rock, lay blissfully immersed in the shallow green water. Near by a couple of women, in red and blue *saris,* were leisurely engaged in polishing large brass *chattis* with mud. Nothing could have been less suggestive of war and its alarms. From the further bank the road curved sharply round to the big village of Coregaum, lying on the right, a brown jumble of dusty brick houses with sloping tiled roofs, and, here and there, the green of tamarind trees or the ubiquitous cactus. Here it was that Captain Staunton put up his historical defence on New Year's day, a hundred years ago, described by Captain Grant Duff, in his *History of the Mahrattas,* as "the most remarkable event of the war."

Lord Hastings was Governor-General at the time. With his assumption of office a marked and vigorous change had come over the administration. As a result the battle of Kirkee was fought on 5th November, 1817, and the Peishwa, Baji Rao, put to flight.

Always remarkable for their rallying powers, the Marathas soon re-formed, enabling the Peishwa again to threaten Poona. On his way to do so he encamped sixteen miles to north-east of his lost capital, near the bank of the Bhima close to the walled village of Koregaon or Coregaum.

News of the Peishwa's approach reaching Colonel Burr, the Officer Commanding Poona, he at once sent to Sirur for reinforcements. In response a force of eight hundred set out at eight o'clock on New Year's Eve, 1817, under Captain Staunton.

This relief column was composed of five hundred Infantry, three hundred newly-raised Irregular Horse and two six pounders, served by twenty-four Europeans of the Madras Artillery.

After an all-night march of twenty-five miles the column reached a point near Koregaon, whence they sighted the whole of the Maratha army, some twenty-five thousand strong, encamped on the opposite bank of the Bhima. The country here is flat, the nearest hills being some distance off. In January the river is low, and easily forded, so that the view, which greeted Captain Staunton, and his tired, hungry and, worst of all, thirsty troops, must have been fairly staggering. They marched on, however. When abreast of the village the enemy perceived their design of taking up a position behind the weak walls, which Grant Duff describes as full of holes and altogether absent on the east side. The river had shrunk to a stream some sixty yards distant. Immediately three companies of the Peishwa's picked troops, each six hundred strong, advanced to attack from three different points. The fight continued all day, watched from a safe distance by the Peishwa, who frequently expressed impatience. Once, when the Raja of Satara put up an *aftabgir* to keep off the sun, Bajirao told him angrily to put it down, " otherwise the English would send a cannon ball through it."

After nightfall the enemy's attacks slackened, and the besieged were able to get water. At 9 p.m. firing ceased, and the Marathas withdrew to their lines. Early on the following morning Staunton opened fire but received no reply. Meanwhile the enemy had got word that General Smith

was advancing, and so moved off in the direction of Poona. Staunton knew nothing of General Smith's movements. He waited until nightfall and then fell back to Sirur, where he arrived on the following morning with as many of the wounded as he could carry. His casualties amounted to nearly three hundred out of a total of eight hundred and thirty-four. The Marathas lost over five hundred, hence the respect with which they always spoke of the defence of Koregaon, a feat alluded to by General Sir T. Hislop as one "of the most heroic and brilliant achievements in the annals of the Army." From that date the motto of the regiment participating became, "Mangalore and Coregaum." Captain Staunton was appointed Aide-de-Camp to the Governor-General, receiving a sword of honour, and five hundred guineas from the Court of Directors. Doubtless other awards would have fallen to his share but for his early death off the Cape of Good Hope.

A little beyond the seventeenth milestone the car crossed a small stream by an Irish bridge, then entered a cool avenue, where the red berries and dark green leaves of banyan trees contrasted prettily with the lighter green foliage, and delicate white flowers of the *nim*. Once out in the open again a string of bullock carts lumbered slowly along from the opposite direction. Despite the best efforts of their drivers the majority took fright, and bolted down the shallow bank into a newly-ploughed field of black cotton soil.

Near the twenty-second mile a signboard pointed to Chakun Fort, some twenty miles to the left, and Talegaon on the right. The latter must not be

confused with the village of the same name on the Bombay-Poona Road noted historically as the furthest point reached, in 1779, by the force of 2600 British troops sent from Bombay to help restore Ragunath Rao, the deposed Peishwa. On the 9th of January of that year, two days before the arrival of the British, the opposing Maratha army set fire to Talegaon by order of Nana Farnavis. Believing that Poona would share the same fate the English decided to fall back upon Bombay. This they did in spite of all that Ragunath Rao could urge to the contrary. Prior to their retirement they threw their heavy guns into the big pond of Talegaon and burnt their stores.

A sinister episode yet further connects the place with the early days of British rule in the Deccan. In 1817, five days after the battle of Kirkee, two brothers of the name of Vaughan were travelling from Bombay to Poona. One was a Captain of the Madras Army, and the other an Officer of Marines. While passing through Talegaon they were seized and, despite offers of ransom, were hanged to a tree by the roadside, at the instigation of a Brahman named Babjee Punt Gokla, who was subsequently captured and imprisoned in a wooden cage in the hill fortress of Sinhgad, overlooking Poona.

Across a masonry bridge, and past an orange grove on the left, to the once fortified village of Sikrapur, now chiefly remarkable for its picturesque aspect and the curious effect produced by its ruined temples; a case of "distance lends enchantment to the view." Closer inspection is disillusioning. Probably the place was of some import-

ance, although I have not come across any historical mention of it.

An ancient stone *masjid*, overlooking the road, is wonderfully successful from an artistic point of view, perched on a high stone terrace approached by fourteen broken steps. The likelihood is that it dates from the Muhammadan Kings of the Deccan. With the restoration of Hindu power, by Sivaji, the mosque became a Siva shrine, and a stone bull was set to guard its arched and pillared hall. Near neighbour to it, inside the ruined village wall, is a still more dilapidated sanctuary. In the court stands a tall conical pillar of grey stone which, on occasions of special festival, is illuminated with *ghi*-fed lamps.

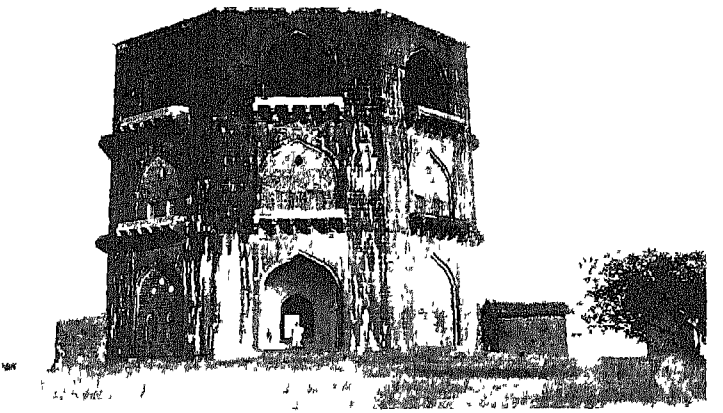
The door of the house opposite stood hospitably open, revealing a clean, well-swept interior, bare but for a number of brightly-coloured prints, depicting different Hindu deities, grouped about a gaudy oleograph of the German Empress surrounded by four of her sons, as young children. Just across the threshold of an inner room squatted a very old woman. She was propped against the wall and two young kids lay on the floor beside her. By this time the barking of innumerable dogs had assembled as many of the villagers as were not pressingly engaged elsewhere. Their acquaintance with Hindustani was as limited as mine with Marathi. I learnt, however, that Sikrapur numbers one thousand and sixty-eight inhabitants. A flatteringly large percentage accompanied me to the remains of a tall square building, possibly once the residence of some Maratha notability. The solid masonry walls were of stone for about twenty

feet above the ground, whence they were continued upwards with brick. The only entrance was a small door to the east.

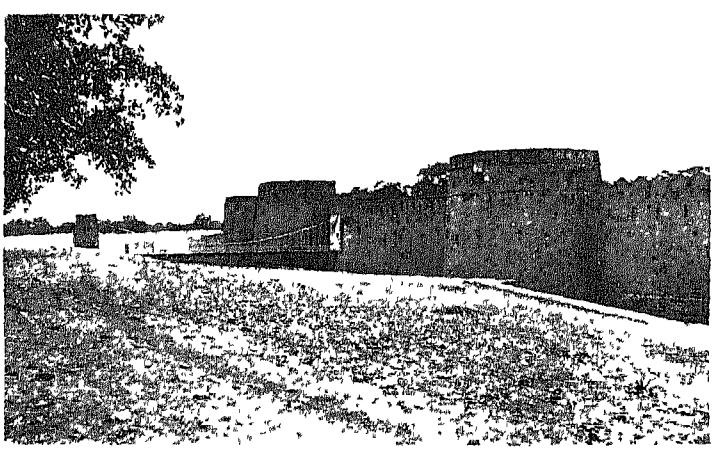
I left the village by the principal gate, a narrow opening between two low round towers in the north-east corner, surmounted by a white flag. For sentinel it had a great scarlet figure of Maruti, the all-popular monkey god, best known outside the Deccan as Hanuman. The Deva was housed in an old square shrine beyond the defences.

The villagers made a picturesque group as they gathered there waiting for the car to start. The majority wore red turbans, white shirts and breeches formed of a cloth caught up in front. Behind, dark against the khaki landscape, lurked the gateway, a shadow cast by mediævalism. In the foreground lay the age-worn temple with its grotesque divinity, a relic of those far distant days when birds and animals spoke with the voice of men, and helped humanity wage an unequal contest against dragons, and other powers of darkness. Beyond, again, was the green of trees and cactus, the whole illumined by a sun so brilliant as to make even the vermilion Hanuman appear pale and lacking in colour, for the sun god brooks no rival. The road wound on past the ornate spires of two Hindu temples and through uneven country, boulder strewn and sparsely grown with scrub, cactus and a small bush aglow with yellow flowers. On all sides the horizon was restricted by low ranges of khaki hills. The only relief from the prevailing brown was a patch of sugar-cane away to the right, where it lay like a green rug on the dry earth.

Shortly before the twenty-eighth mile a sudden



TOMB OF SALABAT KHAN A FAMOUS PRIME MINISTER



PORTION OF FORT AHMEDNAGAR SHOWING DRAWBRIDGE AND SALLY PORT

downward bend led to a stream. The car splashed through and started immediately to climb a short steep hill shaded by big banyan trees, a bountiful sprinkling of yellow leaves amid the glossy green foliage. Afterwards the road ran into flat country. Trees there were, but there were plentiful gaps between when the hot sun beat down pitilessly on the dusty highway. A big village was passed on the right. Here bananas grew and sugar-cane, and the remains of a ruined fort drew disdainfully apart from the hovels threatening its defences as though to crowd it altogether out of existence. Near the thirty-fourth mile was yet another walled village. This boasted a good tank of water. Numerous picturesque temples and shrines lent it a certain air of distinction, and kept alive a tradition of better days, when the fates were more propitious, and the stones of the tumbledown fort resounded to the tread of armed men.

Sivaji taught the people to venerate his many forts, and to speak of them with gratitude as "mothers that fed them." Some of this old affection still perseveres to the present time.

After passing the village near the thirty-fourth mile the country again became irregular, developing a series of mounds and depressions. Tamarind and *nim* lined the road, the white blossoms of the latter tree filling the air with a faint refreshing fragrance. Meanwhile, to left and right, the view was limited by ridges of sandy hillocks. A little past the fortieth milestone my eye was caught by a number of white tombs in the middle distance to left; the graveyard of the old and now abandoned cantonment of Sirur. Leaving the motor-car on

the road I struck across some waste ground to a black wooden gate flanked by white posts, each surmounted by a cross, set between a tamarind and a *nim* tree. Immediately facing the entrance, about fourteen paces away, was a tall fluted column of grey stone. It stood upon five graduated steps and was topped by an urn-shaped monument. On the eastern face was a white marble tablet engraved with the following inscription: "Sacred to the memory of Colonel William Wallace of His Majesty's 74th Regiment of Foot and Commander of the force subsidized by H.H. the Peishwa. A man respected and beloved for his ardent gallantry, devoted public zeal, honourable rectitude and noble candour. He died at Serror on the 11th of May, 1809, aged 47 years."

A typical anecdote is told of Colonel Wallace in connection with the siege of Gavilgad (7th–15th December, 1803) during the second Maratha war. In the course of a night attack certain guns had to be taken on a high and difficult position. Upon word being brought to him that the operation was an impossible one Colonel Wallace called for a light, then taking some papers from his pocket, he exclaimed: "Impossible! It cannot be impossible. Here it is in orders."

Colonel Wallace endowed his tomb to the modest extent of Rs. 9 annually. This sum was entrusted to his groom as caretaker. The spot soon came to be regarded with veneration, and even superstitious awe as the burial place of "Sat Parash," the Holy Man. Pilgrims came to it and testified to miraculous cures effected, and boons conferred as a result. Offerings of goat's meat, grain, sugar, sweetmeats,

flowers and incense poured in steadily. All these good things were piously collected and enjoyed by the ex-groom, who, doubtless, found his new vocation a distinct improvement upon the old. Not only did it ensure him a life of leisured ease, it carried with it sufficient social and spiritual prestige to constitute him a personage in the neighbourhood.

In spite of all this adulation paid to his mortal remains the Colonel's spirit was not at rest. On moonlight nights he was seen wandering around cantonments. Misfortune was sure to follow these ghostly visitations unless propitiatory rites were performed by the graveside. It is on record how the ghost haunted General Smith, who, desirous of putting an end to what he considered an abuse, stopped payment of the annuity from the endowment fund. After Colonel Wallace had appeared before him in spirit to protest against this arbitrary order, General Smith not only restored the money, but appointed the ex-groom custodian of the entire cemetery.

Most of the other tombs in the little *campo santo* are large box-like monuments typical of the style favoured in the early nineteenth century. An annual coat of lime-wash has converted them into "whited sepulchres." The ground is neatly strewn with gravel. There they lie bleaching in the hot sunshine, watched over by a few *nim* and tamarind trees, the air heavy with the fragrance of white *champa* blossoms. A khaki ridge, in the background, is marked by a curious white building of a single wall. Its western face shows five recesses, and its small dome-crowned minars stand out clearly against the blue of the skyline. This is an

Idgah where Muhammadans celebrate the festival which follows the forty days' fast of Ramazan, as the Christian Easter that of Lent. A second and larger *Idgah* stands on a higher eminence about half a mile from the first.

Leaving the white tombs, and the *Idgahs* behind on the left, the road ran on through the ruined remains of old cavalry barracks, and into the picturesque street of the abandoned cantonment. It was from these quiet houses of sloping brown roofs that Captain Staunton, and his little force set out on New Year's Eve a hundred years ago for the historical defence of Coregaum. The place has a peaceful and an orderly look. A canopy of glowing purple bougainvillæas spreads above a cottage as though to hide the missing tiles. The hot yellow sun, and surrounding khaki country may be Indian, but the presiding spirit of the old cantonment is not. Those dead men from the West have left something of themselves, and of their times behind them. In Sirur it is still the early nineteenth century. Even the quaint Hindu temple has not escaped this European influence. The many *rishis*, squatting in rows upon its spire, look like the Troll men of Norwegian legend.

Half a mile or so further on a neat gravelled drive to left branched off to a dak bungalow. Here I called a halt for lunch, garaging the car under the largest of six young banyans that stretched in a line along the east side. The place turned out better than my experience at Loni had led me to anticipate. It boasted three rooms, two deep verandahs and sufficient furniture. Looking eastward the surrounding country rolled away to the

horizon in a succession of khaki waves, broken by a few trees, and a curious octagonal pavilion surmounted by two graduated domes. This stood on a small eminence overlooking the river Ghod, its picturesque, old-world design in striking contrast to the glaring ugliness of its modern neighbour, a zinc-roofed *godown*.

The keeper of the dak bungalow informed me that the graceful domed kiosk was a shrine dedicated to Kali Devi, and the shed a Panjrapol, where old and diseased cattle found an asylum.

Something about the place attracted me, and I decided upon closer inspection. Telling the man to lead the way I followed him across waste land by a winding track, that led past a couple of lonely Muhammadan tombs partly hidden in thorn, and up a steep and stony path between high cactus hedges. At the top stood two guardian shrines, and, beyond them, a *nim* tree seemingly laden with great white flowers. This now proved to be covered with doves. My visit caused a considerable flutter amid the dovecotes when some newly-hatched birdlings were taken out for my inspection. Nor was this all. In spite of my remonstrance the man insisted upon throwing dove after dove into the air, until two hundred pairs of white wings were flapping against the blue sky immediately overhead. The surrounding sheds constituted the Panjrapol supported by Marwaris. Judging by the heaps of fodder lying about the animals had every reason to consider themselves in clover. Further on a walled quadrangle contained the graceful domed pavilion which had excited my admiration from afar. It was empty. For sole attendant it

had a broken stone figure of Nandi, the bull sacred to Siva.

Forty-two and a half miles from Poona the highway crosses the Ghod by a masonry bridge. Near by, to right, was a large Hindu temple. On the whole it was a lonely road. This impression increased the further I proceeded. Everywhere the eye was met by a wide vista of rolling khaki country in many places strewn with dark boulders: by treeless ridges, topped here and there by a solitary stone shrine, and by curious hillocks. All suggested that the land now basking in the sunshine had once been the bottom of the sea. The idea lent a curious fascination to motoring over it, and made the old wayside villages seem very new by comparison, even though the ruined fortifications and ancient temples evoked memories of Hindu, Muhammadan, Moghul and Maratha, and their legends told of dense forests, which plunged the land in impenetrable twilight and were peopled not by men but by *rakshasas*. Suddenly a chink dashed across the road, a black pie-dog in hot pursuit.

The village of Wadhegaon made romantic appeal, set back from the highway near the forty-fourth milestone. A scenic artist would have found inspiration in its many trees, clustering temples and tombs, and in a neighbouring hill crowned by a grey and white Hindu Mandir, which commanded the countryside for some distance.

The drive had been devoid of thrilling incident, when a large signboard inscribed "Danger" seemed to promise a little excitement. This hope evaporated on reading the notice below: "Bridge unsafe for any load over three tons." That certainly did

not apply to me. Next followed a long stretch of treeless country and two more small wooden bridges preceded by similar warnings. Soon after the forty-ninth mile the road began to negotiate a long hill in a series of curves. The fifty-second mile traversed boulder-strewn country with an occasional *babul* tree, and a few low bushes of yellow flowers. A curious effect was produced by two "wind devils" running a race across the plain. Just as it was getting really exciting the road made a sudden bend and I missed the finish. A handsome Hindu temple was sighted on the left surrounded by trees, and then a big white *Idgah*, and several large tombs on the crest of a barren ridge. From first to last the number of shrines passed on the Poona Ahmednagar road is sufficiently great to constitute it a *via sacra*.

Through Supa, with its many curious remains both Hindu and Muhammadan, to a green gate on the left set between white posts in the midst of a dense cactus hedge. This led to the picturesque dak bungalow, its deep roof of dark brown tiles sloping low down over walls washed yellow and white. In front stretched a garden gay with multi-coloured flowers. Overlooking the compound, to west, and divided from it by a winding stream of slimy water, was a curious Hindu temple. Eight sculptured stone pillars supported the massive grey verandah, and numerous divinities were carved upon the spire, which was further enlivened by coloured plaster decorations. The cella was guarded by two black figures of the bull, Nandi. The sloping ground was planted with cactus and bushes of yellow flowers. Away to south-west rose the walls of a

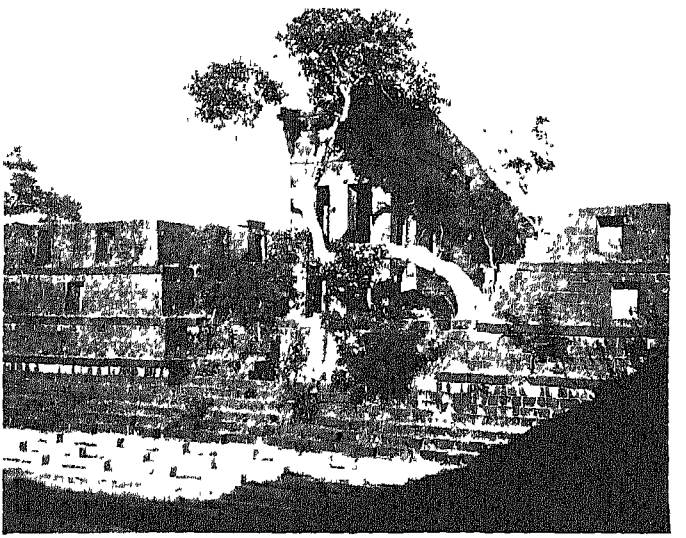
dismantled fort. In common with many of the villages passed on the road Supa is a romantic ruin of once thick walls, tumble-down houses, trees growing out of the crumbling masonry, temples, tombs, *lingams* and sacred spots marked by stones smeared with vermilion.

I only stayed long enough at the dak bungalow for the *khansama* to boil some water for tea. Unfortunately my boy had forgotten a cup, when packing the tiffin basket, and the morning's milk had turned sour, so that cha was not a success.

Soon after the fifty-eighth milestone the car started to climb a long red hill bare but for boulders. Here the road curved round and about, until it finally wound down again to an avenue of *babul* and *nim* trees, which led past a big brown fortress of gloomy aspect, some forty yards to right of the highway behind a field of onions. Beyond lay the village of Kanagaum deep in cactus.

At the sixty-third mile the road began to descend, and before long followed the course of a stream to left, its further bank bright with great clusters of pink and yellow blossoms. The village of Chass was passed on the right, a high, red house of dignified aspect soaring above the straggling brown roofs of its insignificant neighbours, and even dwarfing the elaborate spires of the many temples.

Yet another fortified village was sighted on the right near the seventieth milestone, and a large well on the left. Thereafter *nim* trees lined the road as far as the railway crossing. Here passage was barred by a white gate. I sounded the hooter, but more as a protest than with any hope of result,



THE ELEPHANT WELL, AHMEDNAGAR

and resigned myself to a long wait between acts. To my surprise a very fat woman in red and yellow immediately appeared, and opened the gate. Never before had I met with such promptitude at a railway crossing, and I desire to place it on record as a unique experience, although, I fear, motorists in general will express themselves as sceptical on the subject.

A sharp turn to left and the car ran past Ahmednagar railway station, just seventy-three miles from Poona. A little more and an imposing white cupola loomed large on the left. This, my boy, who was familiar with the neighbourhood, informed me was the dome of the American Mission Church. To the right, and by a garden whence the scent of flowers floated out into the dusty road, then to left, through a stone gateway, into the old walled city that Malik Ahmad, founder of the Nizam Shahi dynasty of Ahmednagar, built on the site of his great victory over the Bahmani forces on the 28th of May, 1490. Out through another gate, and round to the dak bungalow, which looks across the road obliquely to an old domed mausoleum, now converted into a private residence. Truly a case of "a living tomb."

Tea, and a wash, then on to the fort, whereof little remains beyond the walls. These are in an admirable state of preservation and are very strong. From the north-east turret the British flag flew above the white tents of some five hundred German prisoners, a hefty, well-nourished crowd, apparently none the worse in health, or spirits for their enforced rest cure. One was dribbling a football as

I passed. Others paced backward and forward, or stood chatting in front of the tents. Several of the costumes were extremely "praktisch," particularly that of a stout man indulging in a mild constitutional clad in a white muslin shirt, and a pink lungi. Evidently he believed in adapting himself to circumstances in general, and a warm climate in particular.

The car ran along an avenue of great banyan trees, forded a stream and continued up Northcote Road as far as a side turning on the left, which led to the walled enclosure known as Alamgir's Tomb. Entrance was through a white gate festooned with mauve convolvuli. The encircling walls were of stone finished off with a serrated parapet of brick, each of the four corners marked by a round tower. Here, according to the Muhammadan in charge of the garden, Aurangazib Alamgir, the last of the four great Moghuls, died and his body was prepared for burial prior to being transported to the mausoleum, which the Emperor had prepared for himself near Aurangabad.

A low white *masjid* stretches across the western end of the enclosure facing a large white platform surrounded by palms, crotons, orange trees and rose bushes. This supports a plain white tomb. Four small minars spring from the corners, a fifth, at the head, being designed to hold a lamp. Beyond, to east, rises a graceful white Darbar Hall of arched openings, where Aurangazib granted public audience. Steps cut in the main wall led up to the flat roof encircled by a deep parapet, the eastern side marked by a pavilion. The roof commands a fine panorama.

Below to west lies the garden, with its brightly-coloured flowers in pots, its *nim*, gold *mohur* and tamarind trees, the air perfume-laden from the fragrant white blossoms bursting from the bare, snaky branches of a couple of *champa* trees.

Away to east the horizon is bounded by a line of hills dominated by the domed mausoleum of Salabat Khan, the noted *faujdar* of Surat, who died in 1692. According to local report an underground passage connects his tomb with the fort, a distance of several miles. Another mountain ridge, bounding the plain to north, is crowned by the tree-embowered tomb of the *pir* Mihreaoli.

Many memories stirred, as I stood on the roof of the imperial *baradari*, looking down on to the peaceful garden, and the surrounding plain. Here came the Moghul army on the 31st January, 1706, worn out and ruined by forty-six years of fruitless warfare in the Deccan. Here Aurangazib Alamgir breathed his last on Friday afternoon, the 3rd March, 1707, aged ninety-seven. Manucci, the Venetian physician at the court of his son and successor Shah Alam, recounts a curious phenomenon in connection with the event. "At the time the King died a whirlwind arose, so fierce that it blew down all the tents standing in the encampment. Many persons were killed, being choked by the dust, and also animals. The day became so dark that men ran into each other, being unable to see where they were going: villages were destroyed and trees overthrown. This whirlwind lasted up to six o'clock in the evening."

While I looked from his Darbar Hall upon the

place where Muhayyi-ud Din Aurangazib Alamgir (Preserver of the Faith, Ornament of the Throne, World Grasper) had breathed his last, the sun, bright monarch of the earth for a day, sank down behind the white *masjid* in the west to be forgotten, even as the last of the Great Moghuls has been forgotten, by a world ever ready to welcome each successive dawn with the cry : " Le roi est mort ! Vive le roi ! "

VII

SINHGAD

The Famous Maratha Fort

"L'Angleterre avait, après des longues guerres, complété la conquête de l'Inde par la soumission des Marathas en 1818."—A. Debidour, *Histoire Diplomatique de l'Europe.*

THE closing acts of Maratha history were swift and dramatic. On November 5th, 1817, Bajirao, the last Peishwa, withdrew from his palace in Poona to the shrine of the goddess on Parvati Hill, overlooking his capital. From a northern window in the encircling wall of the sanctum he watched his army move out to give battle at Kirkee, some four and a half miles distant. An ill-omened incident marred the start, in the snapping of the pole of the Peishwa's standard, the famous golden streamer. As a pageant the sight must have been a beautiful and brilliant one, as twenty thousand Cavalry, eight thousand Infantry and fourteen guns advanced across the khaki plain. Care was taken not to damage the standing crops, it being an immemorial rule of Hindu warfare to respect agriculture.

Opposed to this host was a British force of two thousand eight hundred. Only eight hundred among the number were Europeans. They were practically without cavalry, and their artillery consisted of seven six pounder and two twelve-pounder guns.

Captain Grant Duff was present at the battle. In his celebrated *History of the Mahrathas*, he describes the advance : " It was towards the afternoon of a very sultry day. There was a dead calm, and no sound was heard except the rumbling of gun wheels."

After a struggle of nearly three hours the Marathas were routed. Upon learning the news Bajirao took to flight, seeking refuge with the Raja of Satara, nominal head of the Maratha state. The last Peishwa managed to elude pursuit until June 3rd, 1818, on which date he surrendered. Meanwhile there remained the task of reducing the numerous mountain forts, which had played so momentous a part in the rise of the Marathas. Of these Sinhgad was the most important, owing to its commanding position in close proximity to the Peishwa's capital.

Abandoned and dismantled though it may be, a place which has once figured prominently in history can never be relegated to the scrap-heap of time. This is particularly true of a famous fort. While one stone stands it constitutes a memorial. Men have fought and died there. Armies have hurled themselves against its defences. Within and without the battered walls desperate deeds have been attempted, attacks launched, long sieges suffered and last hopes led. The very ground is hallowed, for mingled with it is the dust of heroes. Finally, when, like a beautiful woman, its day is done and, in old age, men no longer desire it, history makes it her own for ever, wreathing its battle-scarred stones with the laurels of immortality.

Such a place is Sinhgad, the ancient Lion Fort, some fifteen miles to south-west of Poona. It

stands aloof on the gaunt mountain-top high, difficult of access as an eagle's eyrie, looking across blue lake and khaki plain to the former capital of the Peishwas. Intimately associated with Sivaji, founder of the Maratha Empire, it played a leading part in his strange and eventful career. Not only was it the first really strong position to pass into his power, it was the vantage ground whence he swooped down to play his memorable trick upon Shaisteh Khan, the Moghul Governor of Poona. This daring adventure savours of a mischievous school-boy trick. It lives in the memories of the Maratha people to this day and is still the most popular achievement of their national hero, the mere mention of whose name suffices to light the dullest face with a smile.

On leaving Poona the road to Sinhgad skirts the far-famed Parvati Hill, the most conspicuous landmark for miles around. At first sight the sanctuary is apt to be mistaken for a fortress on account of its high encircling walls. The cult of the goddess dates from the days when mountain-tops were strongholds of religion. The earliest mention of one, in a military connection, does not occur until the ninth century A.D. The main shrine stands in an enclosed court on the loftiest point of the eminence to north-east. It was from here that Bajirao, the last Peishwa (1796–1817) sat watching the fatal battle of Kirkee. To south of the sanctuary rise the remains of a large three-storeyed palace erected by Bajirao. Its destruction by lightning was held ominous of disaster and was shortly followed by his defeat and overthrow. To west of the ruin a big white temple to Vishnu

glistens in the hot yellow sunshine like a great sugar-coated cake.

Proceeding westwards Parvati Hill, which had appeared an isolated mount, is seen to extend in a crescent-shaped ridge. The road follows the same direction through a dim cool avenue of red-berried banyan trees, their root-fringed branches mingling to form a leafy arch overhead. To right is the valley irrigated by the Muhta River. Beyond, again, the khaki plain stretches to bare brown hills that draw a jagged line along the horizon. On the left a tall, slender Hindu temple lifts its spire above a high-encircling wall hedged about with trees and cactus. Further on to right a small shrine, perched on a square stone platform in the river bed, stands surveying its reflection in the green waters of the Muhta. Near the sixth milestone a couple of ruined masonry posts are all that remain of two fortified gateways where a toll was, possibly, levied. For a brief space sugar-cane lines the way. Occasionally a few huts are passed, frail shelters loosely thatched with straw. Here and there banana patches dot the landscape with vivid green, varied by groves of mango and scattered palms. The road curves upwards to a small bridge, its ugly sides of corrugated iron rising to an unusual height. Once across the canal the country opens out in a view unrestricted by trees, their place having been taken by cactus. Country wagons, herds of cattle, chiefly goats and buffaloes, and pedestrians innumerable form the principal traffic. The women are dressed in red, or blue, sometimes a combination of both. They wear a surprising amount of jewellery. Gold *mohurs* strung

on to necklaces seem the most popular form of adornment.

The road passes Karachwasla, a village of stone houses below sloping roofs of brown Deccan tiles. Its name combines two Marathi words signifying rockside. Almost immediately the blue waters of Fife Lake flash into view. Some eleven miles long, but nowhere more than three-quarters of a mile wide, its sudden twists and turns successfully conceal its extent. Three or four skiffs, belonging to the Connaught Boat Club, lie high and dry on the stony foreshore. Otherwise the banks are bare of trees or vegetation. A curious hush pervades the scene. Apparently no birds frequent that stretch of radiant blue.

For a brief space the road skirts the lake. To left a path strikes uphill to a bungalow, the property of the Public Works Department. It lies hidden from sight behind a pretty garden, its verandah smothered in flowering creeper. Near the twelfth milestone the thoroughfare splits into a fork. Sinhgad is reached by following the road to the left, which rapidly degenerates into a *kutcha rasta*, or mere track. The surrounding country is wild. Nothing grows but a little rank grass, a rare bush and cactus, excepting where, on a small sandy hillock, a solitary flame of the forest flaunts its vivid scarlet flowers as though a danger signal. Overhead arches a sky of brilliant cloudless blue.

As the road advances the gaunt hills press closer in an ever-narrowing circle. Small villages are passed, now on this side, then on that. Each has its rude stone temple low and square. Near the shrine is a roughly carved stone pedestal in which

the sacred *tulsi* plant grows. Yet another essential is the *dipmal*, a tall weather-worn pillar of conical shape liberally provided with small shelves for festival lights.

The track narrows as it runs between the poor hovels of a little hamlet, then turns sharply to the right, dips down to ford a stream and abruptly up again. Two banyans spread protecting branches above the fourteenth milestone. Next comes a cool avenue of *nim*, tamarind and banyan trees. An occasional breath of perfume tells of hidden flowers. The road suddenly descends, after passing the fifteenth milestone, bends to the right and comes to an end under a couple of mango trees. Opposite, on the hillside, a few brown houses are picturesquely set amid fragrant white *champa* trees laden with blossoms, and a single scarlet flame of the forest.

The spot seemed singularly deserted. Soon, however, a crowd of coolies appear, as though out of the earth. Competition is brisk for the privilege of carrying my luncheon basket. A decrepit-looking chair is brought forward slung upon two bamboo poles. With smiles and persuasive gestures I am invited to take my seat, but decline. Who, I ask, is best able to act as guide to the Fort? A big fellow at once volunteers. His information is hereditary and unimpeachable. His expression does not promise much intelligence but probably his memory is good. Among his fellow villagers he evidently takes precedence as the undisputed authority upon Sinhgad.

The old Lion Fort commands one of the loftiest points of the Sinhgad-Bhuleswar Range. It stands

on a rugged mountain top 4322 feet above sea level, and some 2300 feet higher than the Poona plain. The northern and southern faces of the cliff are precipitous. A high narrow ridge connects the stronghold with the Purandhar heights.

At first the path strikes due south and is not particularly steep. The mountains stretch around in crescent formation. There is no sign of the Fort. Shade is lent by some sad-looking teak trees. Soon these are left behind. Cactus grows plentifully, the variety being the smooth many-branched kind called by the coolies "Nivdung." A big bushy-faced monkey, of the *langur* species, bounds across the path and disappears amid the rocks. The climb is exceedingly stiff, as the track zigzags higher up the mountain. There is no shade of any kind, and the sun beats fiercely upon the exposed hillside. The last bit is the most formidable, as the rock rises wall-like forty feet to the first gate. Known as the Poona Darwaza, this faces east. It is a small doorway wedged between the sheer face of the cliff on the left, and a low round tower to the right of massive stone, age-blackened and weed-grown. The path continues upwards to the Dilli Darwaza, a narrow portal flanked by twin bastions then down, and up again to the Munka Darwaza, the low-arched doorway of which is surmounted by a little carving. The interior contains a guard-room. From here a strong stone wall runs round the summit of the mountain, a distance of some two miles. At intervals old cannon lie on the ground forgotten amid invading weeds, their muzzles still trained upon Poona.

The ground inside the defences is irregular and

boulder-strewn. A few stunted trees grow, and some rank grass. It is very silent and lonely. There are no birds or butterflies, not even a wheeling kite or flying fox. Practically nothing remains of the original buildings, but subterranean stables hewn out of rock, and a surprising number of tanks and rain-water cisterns. There are said to be three hundred and sixty of these primitive reservoirs. The whole place is dotted with them. The air is delightfully fresh, in spite of the hot sun, and several degrees cooler than where Lake Fife draws a streak of clouded blue across the sun-illumined plain. To north-east the country rolls away to the far distant horizon in a series of khaki ridges.

When and by whom Sinhgad was built are not known. The first mention of it comes from the pen of Ferishta, who describes it as a Hindu fortress besieged, in 1340, by Muhammad Tuglaq, the Delhi Emperor known by the nickname of the Khuni Sultan, or Bloody King. At that date the fortress was practically impregnable, the only approach being a narrow rock-cut passage. Nag Naik, its Koli Chief, held out for eight months. Finally starvation forced him to capitulate. The Delhi Emperor renamed the palace Khondana, put a Muhammadan garrison in charge and withdrew with his army to Daulatabad.

In the following century the stronghold was stormed by Malik Ahmad, founder of the Ahmednagar dynasty (1490–1605). To his descendant, King Bahadur Nizam (1595–1605), the Marathas owe their rise to power. The story is a remarkable one and rich in adventure.

Sivaji, the founder of the Maratha Empire, was

born in May 1627, at Shivner, the hill fort above the ancient city of Junnar, fifty miles from Poona. Some years before this event his grandfather, Maloji Bhonsla, had been ennobled by King Bahadur Nizam of Ahmednagar with the title of Raja. The Maratha also received the Jagirs of Poona and Supa, and the forts of Shivner and Chakun, the latter situated on the Nasik Road eighteen miles from Poona. In 1600 the great Moghul Emperor Akbar captured Ahmednagar. After his death Moghul power in the Deccan declined. In 1605 Murtaza Nizam was restored to the throne of which his line had temporarily been deprived. He owed his accession to the services of Malik Amber, an Abyssinian slave, who rose to be Prime Minister of Ahmadnagar, which state he virtually ruled for a quarter of a century. Meanwhile affairs had prospered with the ennobled Maratha. He was fortunate in having as patron Lukhji Jadhaorao, the chief Maratha at the Ahmednagar Court. By means of a trick Maloji Bhonsla secured a brilliant matrimonial alliance for his son Shahaji. The occasion was the Holi festival, always a merry season among Hindus. According to custom Maloji proceeded to pay his respects to his patron accompanied by his five-year-old son. By way of a joke Jadhaorao seated the little lad beside his small daughter Jijibai, then three or four years of age. Still jesting he asked her if she would like the boy as a husband? All laughed. To their surprise Maloji Bhonsla rose and gravely accepted what he persisted in treating as a formal offer of marriage. Both Jadhaorao and his wife were indignant at such presumption. In the end, however, in spite

of his son's greatly inferior social position, Maloji Bhonsla carried his point and the wedding was duly celebrated. Two children were born of the union. Sivaji was the younger and more celebrated.

When his famous grandson was two years old Maloji Bhonsla died. Shahaji succeeded to his father's estates of Poona and Supa, and the hill forts of Shivner and Chakun. He very shortly severed his connection with Ahmednagar. Tendering his services to the Moghuls he was warmly welcomed by the Emperor Jahangir, who confirmed him in his inherited Jagirs and presented him with a dress of honour and two *lakhs* of rupees. Despite these, and other marks of imperial favour, Shahaji transferred his allegiance to Bijapur. This incensed the Moghuls, who retaliated by seizing his wife Jijibai, and little son Sivaji, whereupon Shahaji came to terms. Eventually his wife and child were restored to him. For safety he sent both to his hill stronghold of Khondana, or Sinhgad.

Shahaji persisted in a shifty policy, allying himself with one party or another as his interests dictated. The year 1636 found him allied with Ahmednagar against the Moghul Emperor and the King of Bijapur. The combination proving too strong for him he fled to Khondana. From there he escaped to the Konkan, where he was forced to remain until he made peace with Bijapur. This he effected by ceding Khondana and four other important forts.

When Sivaji was twelve years old his father sent him to Poona for his education. The boy lived with his mother in the Lal Mahal, or Red Palace built for them, in 1632, by Dadaji Konadeo, a Deccan Brahman manager of Shahaji's local estates

and the boy's guardian. Sivaji received the usual training of a Maratha Chief. Reading and writing were not included in the curriculum. Instead he learnt to be a fearless rider, a good sportsman and an adept at archery. He was well schooled in the laws of his caste and in the Puranas by Dadaji. His Brahman preceptor further imbued him with a deep love and reverence for ancient Hindu rites, and a passion for religious and war-like stories. Naturally of a mystical and adventurous temperament, this training increased the boy's inherent tendencies to a dangerous extent. From his sixteenth year he frequented the society of freebooters, with whom he disappeared for days at a time. It was an open secret that he took part with them in daring gang robberies in the Konkan. With the Maolis, a local hill tribe, he went hunting in the western ranges. In this way he became familiar with that wild mountainous district and learnt its possibilities. He saw how carelessly the forts were held, and was shrewd enough to realize that, although easy enough to seize, while in so neglected a condition, they would be very difficult to retake were they put in a proper state of defence.

Dadaji became seriously alarmed by the boy's wild escapades. Thinking to sober him he placed him in charge of his father's Poona estates. At nineteen years of age the lad started upon his strange career of conquest. He began by seizing the old hill fort of Torna, in Bhor territory some twenty miles to south-west of Poona. A year later he followed up this initial success by making himself master of Rajgad, a neighbouring peak three miles to the south-east. He immediately

started to strengthen its fortifications. An unexpected find of treasure trove, the whereabouts of which were, he declared, revealed to him by the goddess Bhawanee in a dream, greatly facilitated his operations at this period. His predilection for hill fastnesses inspired the nickname of "Mountain Rat" which his bitter opponent, the Moghul Emperor, Aurangazib, subsequently applied to him.

Shortly after Sivaji had appropriated Rajgad, his guardian Dadaji Konadeo fell seriously ill. On his deathbed the Brahman foretold a great future for his pupil, whom he exhorted to press on towards his predestined goal. With his last breath he appointed Sivaji the guardian of Brahmans, Hindu shrines and cows. Thereafter Sivaji proclaimed his independence by annexing his father's estates in and about Poona. He informed Shahaji that, henceforward, he must content himself with the revenue from his possessions in the Konkan. Before Sivaji could defy his father with impunity it was necessary for him to get command of Supa, Chakun and Khondana. He took the first by force. The others yielded to strategy. The Muhammadan Commandant of Khondana handed over the fortress for a substantial monetary consideration. Sivaji immediately restored its ancient Hindu title of Sinhgad. Stirring days followed for the old stronghold. By 1662 Sivaji had become a power in the land. Not only had he acquired considerable territory and wealth, he had an army of remarkable mobility and a formidable navy. The entire Maratha race acknowledged him as their leader. In return for being left unmolested at Goa the Portuguese supplied him with ammunition. Apprehensive of the

Marathas' growing influence Aurangazib, the Mogul Emperor, despatched his maternal uncle, Shaisteh Khan, to the Deccan, with a strong army to destroy Sivaji. The latter was at Supa when news of the danger reached him. He promptly fell back to Sinhgad, leaving his cavalry to harass the enemy's advance. This they effectually did, nevertheless Shaisteh Khan took Supa and occupied Poona. The Moghul General made his headquarters in the Lal Mahal, Sivaji's old home, a square building possessed of extensive subterranean apartments. Then it was that the " Mountain Rat " planned the daring exploit, which has been handed down by his countrymen as the most popular of his many adventures. It will continue to excite their unbounded admiration so long as one Maratha lives to tell, and another to listen to the tale.

The close proximity of Sivaji, coupled with the fact that Poona was not a walled city, led Shaisteh Khan to double his usual precautions against a surprise. Passports were required of all armed Marathas. No Maratha horseman might enter unless an accredited follower of a chief who held his lands direct from the Moghul Emperor. None the less Sivaji, in his mountain stronghold, was well informed of all that passed in the forbidden city. Two Brahmans acted as his secret agents. They gained over one of Shaisteh Khan's foot-soldiers who, on the pretext of celebrating a marriage, obtained permission for several of his comrades to join in the wedding procession, which he further requested might be enlivened by the customary beating of tomtoms and other musical instruments.

All the preliminaries carefully agreed upon Sivaji

chose an April evening for the adventure. Shortly after sunset he emerged from the low outer gate of Sinhgad at the head of five hundred picked followers. As he proceeded he posted small companies at various points along the road. Finally he entered Poona with twenty-five men and two officers, Yusaji Kunk and the celebrated national hero, Tannaji Malusre. All had the advantage of being intimately acquainted with every street and by-way. Under cover of darkness they joined the noisy wedding party. At dead of night they reached the Lal Mahal, the palace in which Sivaji had passed his adventurous boyhood, now the official residence of the Moghul Governor. They began by forcing a window above the cook-house. Hardly were they inside when a woman raised the alarm. Accounts vary somewhat as to what exactly happened. According to Grant Duff, Shaisteh Khan was escaping through a window when he was attacked. In defending himself he lost one of his fingers. Khafi Khan asserts that three Maolis made direct for the Governor's bedroom. Two tumbled into a cistern. The third fell upon Shaisteh Khan and severed his thumb. The Moghul General retaliated by running his assailant through the body. A couple of slave girls hastened to their master's rescue. Finding him wounded they dragged Shaisteh Khan to a place of safety. His son Abdul Fateh Khan was killed, as were most of the Palace guard.

Amid the confusion Sivaji and his followers made good their escape. When at a safe distance from Poona they lit torches, and, collecting their scattered bands, they climbed the hill to Sinhgad,

waving hundreds of lights in full view of the Moghul army encamped in the plain below.

Early on the following morning an avenging body of Moghuls galloped out to the Fort, brandishing their weapons and shouting to the inspiring accompaniment of kettle-drums. Sivaji allowed them to approach close up to the outer gate before he opened fire. The effect was disconcerting to the enemy, who fell back in confusion. The Moghul retreat was harassed by a party of Marathas ambushed below. The occasion is memorable as being the first on which the imperial cavalry was pursued by Maratha horse.

For some time after this Sivaji continued to make Sinhgad his headquarters, returning there laden with booty after his raid upon Surat in 1664. While in the fort he celebrated the obsequies of his father. His next important exploit was the sack of Ahmednagar. He defeated the army of Bijapur, and burnt Vengurla, having first despoiled it of considerable treasure.

Exasperated and alarmed by Sivaji's successes, the Moghul Emperor, Aurangazib, sent the famous Rajput General Jai Singh, popularly known as the Mirza Raja of Ambar, to crush him. Fate favoured the Rajput leader. In April 1665 he proceeded to blockade Sinhgad. Fortunately for the speedy success of the expedition Sivaji's wife happened to be in the fortress. With her were a number of her husband's relatives on the maternal side. Altogether the besieged amounted to seven thousand persons. It being out of Sivaji's power either to rescue or send them provisions, he sent word to Jai Singh tendering his humble submission. A

treaty was drawn up whereby he forfeited twenty of his thirty forts. No sooner was Sinhgad again a Muhammadan stronghold than a numerous garrison of Rajputs was placed in charge.

Emerging from the shadow of the innermost of the three old gateways, through which Sivaji passed on an April evening to surprise Shaisteh Khan in his palace at Poona, the path strikes westwards. On the left lies a large cave of curious echoes. Here tradition asserts Sivaji stabled his horses. The low roof is artificially smoothed and upheld by roughly-hewn monolothic pillars. Now the floor is flooded to a depth of a foot or more. The water bubbles up from a spring and is fresh and clear. A little further on a small square stone shrine to Ganapati, the elephant-headed god, stands beside a tank of opaque green water. A cistern near by contains gold fish. Everywhere the uneven ground shows traces of masonry, with here and there a stunted tree, or upright slab whereon is carved a figure of Maruti. The popular monkey god is painted a bright vermilion. Amid the prevailing ruin and desolation four high walls still remain erect. These enclose a large quadrangle entered by doors on the east and west sides, and constituted the Zor Khana, or Gymnasium of the garrison.

The southern part of the fort commands a wild and singularly grand panorama. Lofty mountain ridges stretch one behind the other to the horizon in shades of khaki changing to misty blue, and fading thence to grey. Away to the west rises the sharp peak of Torna, the first fort annexed by Sivaji when the great Maratha was barely nineteen years of age. South-west of it, on another rugged

bluff, stands Rajgad, his second capture. Further on a third mountain-top stabs the vast sky, its heights girdled by the ramparts of yet another famous fort, that of Purandhar. Tortuous paths and hidden passes wend their way to Raigarh, the Royal Fort, where, on June 6th, 1674, Sivaji caused himself to be crowned King of the Marathas. The occasion was marked by much pomp, ceremony and magnificence. Due observance was paid to rites and omens, and all honour paid to Bhawanee, the goddess under whose special protection Sivaji felt himself to be. No sooner was the coronation service over than Mr. Henry Oxendon, afterwards Deputy Governor of Bombay, hastened to pay his respects to the newly-created sovereign. Oxenden was accompanied by two of the East India Company's factors. The three had been despatched to the Maratha Court by the Council at Surat, and appear to have spent the months of May, June, and July treating with Sivaji on the top of Raigarh.

Referring to his coronation they describe having found him seated upon a magnificent throne. Grouped about him were splendidly-attired courtiers. They further depict him as " of a handsome, intelligent countenance and, for a Maratha, fair-skinned. His eyes are keen, his nose long, aquiline and somewhat drooping, his beard trim and peaked, and his moustache slight. His expression is rapid and resolute, hard and feline."

Raigarh, which had seen Sivaji crowned, witnessed him die on April 5th, 1680. Another month and he would have celebrated his fifty-third birthday. Death was caused by an injury to the leg.

On its southern side the steep approach to Singhad is barred by a particularly massive gateway, the Kalyan Darwaza, so named from the village below. High above, on the hill top, stands a significant monument, one of the landmarks in Maratha history. Square in shape, and not more than four feet high, it is of black stone and supports a small shrine containing the figure of a Maratha warrior in full armour. The right hand grasps a sword and the left a circular shield. The statue represents the national hero, Tannaji Malusre. It faces the spot, some forty paces distant, where he fell fighting. The story is one of the most popular in Maratha history. Briefly it is this:

After Sivaji had ceded Sinhgad to the Moghul Emperor, as represented by the gallant and chivalrous Raja of Ambar, Jai Singh, the latter garrisoned it with a thousand of his own Rajputs, commanded by Ude Ban, a leader of noted courage and ability. Sivaji was greatly hampered by having his city of Poona under the eye and the guns of the enemy. Desperate though the attempt seemed, he decided to retake Sinhgad. Summoning Tannaji Malusre he entrusted him with the venture. Tannaji stipulated that he might be accompanied by his younger brother, Suryaji.

In February 1670 the two brothers set out from Raigarh at the head of a thousand Maolis. As a precautionary measure the force split up into small parties. Pursuing different paths through the mountains, to avoid exciting suspicion, they met below Sinhgad, on the west side, as agreed at the dark of the moon.

For his attempt Tannaji selected the steepest

point as less likely to be closely guarded. The Marathas were adepts at surprises of the kind. It is claimed that on all such expeditions they made use of specially-trained *ghorpads*. These great lizards were skilfully schooled to carry a light rope up the face of the precipice and make it fast to some projection. Local tradition asserts that Tannaji employed a *ghorpad* on this occasion, and also that he was the first to mount. His men rapidly swarmed up after him. As each reached the top he lay down flat and waited for his comrades. Three hundred had ascended when the alarm was raised. A sentry advanced to investigate the disturbance but was instantly shot dead by an arrow. Although provided with firearms, every tenth Maratha carried a bow and arrow for use in surprise attacks, where silence was an essential of success. Shouts, the noise of men aroused from sleep and arming in haste, the glare of torches and flaring blue lights warned Tannaji that it was a case of now or never. He dashed forward, followed by his men.

Immediately above the sheer black rock escaladed by the Marathas the height was crowned by a dancing hall, where *Nautch* girls entertained the garrison. Near here Tannaji lost his left hand, which was subsequently buried on the spot. A monument was erected over it similar to the one marking the site of his funeral pyre. Twisting a cloth over his wound Tannaji pressed on until borne down by overwhelming numbers and killed. As he fell the Maolis turned and fled. They were met by a reinforcement under Suryaji. He shouted to them that he had cut the ropes and so rendered

retreat impossible. Next he rallied them by appealing to their affection for Tannaji. "Who among you would abandon your father's dead body to be tossed into a pit by Mhars?" he cried. They responded with their dread battle-cry, "Har! Har! Mahadeo!" and carried the Fort. No time was lost in giving the prearranged signal of victory, namely the firing of a thatched house inside the walls. Sivaji's joy in the success was short-lived. When he heard of Tannaji's death he said sadly: "The den is taken but the lion is slain."

Contrary to his practice of never making presents to his soldiers Sivaji treated the capture of Sinhgad as an exceptional case. Each member of the storming party was decorated with a silver bracelet. The Officers were suitably rewarded and Suryaji appointed Commandant of the Fort.

To north of the monument to Tannaji's hand, a rough flight of rock-cut steps leads down to a depression forming an enclosure about a grey-domed building. This is the *samadh* of Raja Ram, the younger of Sivaji's two sons, and the third head of the Maratha Empire. The shrine erected above his funeral pyre faces east. A figure of Ganapati surmounts the doorway. The interior is gay with brightly-painted frescoes in contrasting shades of blue. A shining brass *lingam* occupies the place of honour, watched over by a brass cobra and garlanded with sweetly-perfumed pink and white roses.

Closely pursued by Aurangazib's army Ram Raja fled to Sinhgad in February 1700, succumbing to consumption a month later. Aurangazib invested the fort for two months. At the end of that time

shortage of provisions and a liberal bribe induced the Commandant to yield. The Moghul Emperor was highly elated and promptly renamed the stronghold Bakshindabaksh, or God's Gift. In 1706 the imperial army evacuated Poona. The Marathas speedily repossessed themselves of their great hill fort. Grief at its loss is said to have accelerated Aurangazib's death.

On the plea that she wished to revisit Raja Ram's tomb, his widow, the celebrated Queen Regent, Tara Bai, obtained admission to Sinhgad, in 1760. Old woman though she then was, her unconquerable spirit was as formidable as ever. She utilized the opportunity to hatch plots, and further intrigues to have herself reinstated as head of the Maratha Empire. The Peishwa, however, if not her superior, was at least her match at this game.

In the autumn of 1802 Baji Rao, the last of the Peishwas, fled to Sinhgad after his defeat, by Holkar, at the Battle of Poona fought on October 25th of that year. It was at Sinhgad that he entered into the memorable agreement with the British Resident, Colonel Close—afterwards Major-General Sir Barry Close—whereby he undertook to subsidize six English sepoy battalions and to cede twenty-five lakhs annually for their maintenance.

Although Baji Rao suffered an overwhelming defeat at the Battle of Kirkee on November 5th, 1817, Sinhgad did not become a British possession until the following spring. General Pretzler started to invest the Fort in February 1818. His head-quarters were near Kalyan, the village which gives its name to the southern gate. It was from this

side that Tannaji effected his memorable surprise in February 1670.

On February 21st a British battery, consisting of one eight-inch mortar, a five-and-a-half inch howitzer and two six pounders, opened fire on the Poona gate from the crest of the ridge at a distance of about eight hundred yards. Six Companies of the second battalion of the 7th Bombay Infantry, and a body of Auxiliary Horse were stationed below near the village of Donje. Four more batteries came shortly into action from different points. One thousand four hundred and fourteen shells, and two thousand eight hundred and eighty-one pounder shots had been fired when the garrison hoisted the white flag on March 1st. Early the next day twelve hundred men marched out of the Fort. Each carried his personal arms and private property. Among the number were four hundred Arabs and seven hundred Gosaris.

The old Lion Fort yielded an immense amount of booty, including a quantity of pearls and diamonds said to have been hurried there for safe keeping by wealthy Poona merchants. For days the soldiers went about with helmets full of gold ornaments and precious stones, ignorant of their value but eager to exchange them for money, or bills on Bombay before the prize agents arrived to take tally of the loot. A gold figure of the elephant-headed god Ganapati was found built into a masonry pillar. This alone was valued at five *lakhs* of rupees. Forty-two guns, two wall-pieces and considerable ammunition were also secured.

Its surrender to the British, on March 1st, 1818, was the last event of importance in the long and

stirring history of Sinhgad. After many centuries of war, and its alarms, the old Lion Fort has now completed a hundred years of peace. It is strangely quiet up there on the lonely hill top. The silence is not that of oblivion but rather of reverie. When night approaches shadowy forms mount guard upon the ramparts. Ghostly lights flicker where once was the Dancing Hall, and a red radiance illumines the site of Tannaji's funeral pyre. The muffled tramping of horses' hoofs sounds from the subterranean stables, and now and then a stifled cry, or is it the moaning of the wind?

Does Tannaji ever come back at the dark of the moon, scaling the precipice beyond the Kalyan Darwaza, or steal with Sivaji and his five hundred through the Poona gate, on a warm April evening, to surprise Shaisteh Khan asleep in his palace below? Is there still treasure of diamonds, pearls and gold in slimy tank, echoing cave, or buried deep 'neath the short dry grass of Sinhgad?

VIII

A NEW YEAR'S OUTING FROM MADRAS

LOCAL colouring and the thermometer are responsible for many things. They even determine the spending of two days' leave. With the mercury registering 80 degrees, the joyous season makes quite other appeal to what it does at freezing point. So it came about that 7.30 a.m., on New Year's Eve, found me motoring along Mount Road, Madras, en route for Seven Pagodas, and those old gods, who could already boast a hoary antiquity ere ever the star drew the Wise Men of the East to Bethlehem, or Santa Claus became the special Providence of children born in the western hemisphere.

Soon European shops and other large buildings dwindled into a bazaar. The car sped down a fine avenue of banyan, tamarind and the conspicuous globe *marrum*, or sausage tree, an alien from Madagascar. Much of the ground bordering the highway was under water. The paddy fields were of a bright emerald green, and the Long Tank mirrored the palm trees on its outer bank, the blue sky and fleecy white clouds, as in a looking glass. A herd of small pigs ran squeaking to one side, driven by a woman in a dingy red *sari*, who wielded a stick with a practised hand. The Teachers' College, Saidapet, gleamed white in the morning

sunshine with a reflected light of learning. A little more and the yellow pillars of Marmalong Bridge came into sight, the white crosses on each giving timely warning that near by was holy ground. Below flowed the Adyar River, its left bank gay with a wonderfully varied display of lingerie, and other garments, to chronicle which would call for a genius equal to that inspiring the author of *Sartor Resartus*. Beyond, on the further bank, stood the Little Mount, where St. Thomas, the "Doubting Apostle," sought refuge from persecution hiding in a cave over which, some sixteen centuries later, the Portuguese erected a church. The cave still exists, but holy places are no longer the draw which they used to be, hence the Monte Pequene, of Manucci's "Storia do Mogor," is somewhat deserted.

A sharp turn to the right, near the statue of the King-Emperor George V, and over the railway crossing at Guindy, an open expanse of green resolved itself into the parade ground, St. Thomas' Mount. The northern end is conspicuous for a large white monument to Lt.-Colonel Dalrymple, R.A., in the architectural style characteristic of the early eighteenth century. Here the road split into a fork. A signpost pointed left to Pallavaram. Away to the south-west rose the Great Mount, world-famed as the scene of the Apostle's martyrdom. On the summit the white Portuguese Church to Our Lady, erected A.D. 1547, shone beacon bright through the green of encircling trees. Keeping to the level the road ran past the grey garrison Church of St. Thomas. Beyond, on the same side, lay a large white building, once the handsomest Artillery Mess in India. It is now used as an Infantry Mess.

Built over a century ago, its walls must have listened to many a stirring tale of those stormy days when constant wars with the Moghuls, Marathas, Haider Ali, Tippu Sultan, the Portuguese, French and Dutch rendered life at St. Thomas' Mount more eventful than at present. Tamarind, banyan and palm trees lined the route occasionally intermingled with aloes. Much of the plain was under water. After the tenth milestone the road deteriorated. On the left lay a rifle range. At Pallavaram a low ridge of sharply pointed hills broke the monotony. At their base scars showed where great blocks of stone had been quarried for the construction of the Madras Harbour. Crowning the highest peak was a white mausoleum and *masjid*, a favourite place of pilgrimage with followers of the Prophet, who gather there in force at Bara Wafat, the anniversary of his death. Here there was a parting of the ways, the road branching right and left. In the absence of a signpost I proceeded in the wrong direction until enquiry of an intelligent pedestrian caused me to reverse. To the left I perceived a large block of stone with "Chingleput 83 miles" unobtrusively carved upon its further face. Soon the highway was split down the middle by piles of stones which, apparently, had been there for some time. Grass was sprouting around them and weeds, converting them into quite decorative rockeries. Meanwhile the road was badly in need of repair. A toll-keeper demanded his fee, flag in hand. To left the sunlight played brilliantly upon a wide expanse of water, and on the further bank gleamed the twin domes of a white mosque. Guinea fowl scurried out of the way of the car as I stopped for water at Chrompet, a hamlet of palm-

thatched huts, cactus and aloes. Here great banyans met in an effective green arch overhead. A woman squatted before a flat pan skilfully balanced on three stones, her cooking operations watched by all the children of the locality. About her, various foodstuffs, in round baskets, drew a magic circle. A long string of bullock carts rumbled past, their huge wheels acting in lieu of sides to keep the heavy loads of wood and fodder in position. To the right a board inscribed "Chrome Leather Factory" pointed up a lane of neat red-roofed houses. After this followed a stretch of wild country. Aloes grew plentifully in what was, evidently, congenial soil. Frequent pools of water flashed like so many mirrors in the sunlight. Scrub softened the red sides of a many-pointed ridge. Far away a lonely hill caught the eye. Mysterious stone walls imprisoned its summit. Above them rose the spire of a Hindu temple and a lofty flagstaff of the curious kind known as *divajasthamba*, a sign peculiar to shrines where the god is carried in procession.

Near the sixteenth milestone the car passed Tambarram, a little railway station. Tree-clad hills showed greenish-grey against the horizon and everywhere the plain sparkled with the play of sunbeams upon water. The effect was magical, investing the wild landscape with a strange beauty and brilliance. Just before the seventeenth milestone the thoroughfare traversed the railway, here a narrow track of a single line. Next the car ran between a tall straight avenue of palms. At either side the red earth was carpeted with the vivid green of paddy fields. Soon these disappeared and the palms gave place to spreading rain trees, amid which an occasional

glimpse of the walls of the old Fort, of whitewashed houses beneath red-tiled roofs, of green patches of banana, of the large white Government Hospital, and finally into the shade of trees to the railway station. It was exactly 9.20 a.m.

After a very excellent breakfast in Spencer's refreshment room, by eleven o'clock I was again en route. Keeping to the left, the palm-fringed road commanded attractive views of the great lake and verdant hills beyond. The first milestone encountered registered the number seventeen, hence the presumption that this was the distance as reckoned from Seven Pagodas. Near a small village the highway divided, and a signpost inscribed "Sudras and Seven Pagodas" pointed to the left. The countryside was green with rice and the road pleasantly shaded. A large stone tank lent distinction to a village of mud walls and thatched roofs. Desert followed, strewn with boulders, between which the prickly pear thrust thorny branches, and low bush made spasmodic efforts to mask the nakedness of the land. The country was uneven, hillocks springing up in all directions. In one place the rocky spur of a low ridge stopped just short of the road. Suddenly a chain of four hills stood out sharply against the blue sky. Dark, fortress-like walls girdled the highest peak, dominated by the pointed grey spire of the old Vedagirisvara Temple, dating from the days of the Pandya and Chola Kings. The presiding deity owes his resounding title of God of the Vedas to the belief that he took these sacred works under his special protection, transforming them into four small mountains, the loftiest of which supports his shrine soaring some

500 feet above the village of Tirukkalukunram. The eminence is locally known as the Hill of the Sacred Kites, from two of these birds which fly there regularly every morning, at eleven o'clock, to be fed. Needless to say that they are no ordinary kites, but the spirits of two Saints, the sons of an ascetic from Benares. Prior to shifting off this mortal coil at Tirukkalukunram, countless centuries ago, these holy men promised to return daily, in the form of kites, and accept of food.

Before reaching the village, beyond which lies Sudras, an old Dutch settlement of some importance in its day, the side track to Seven Pagodas branched off to the left from the main road. Soon it ran past a big tree, on the right, ringed round with *nagakals*, or carved stone cobras. Almost opposite, steps led to a many-pillared *mantapam*, and an elaborately carved shrine, at the foot of the Sacred Hill of the Kites. From there flights of stone stairs, flanked by ruined pillars, climbed upward to the ancient sanctuary, once a favourite place of pilgrimage much resorted to by sufferers from leprosy. The road narrowed as it pursued an easterly course. Villages were succeeded by paddy fields, which, in turn, gave place to desolate stretches of flat red-brown earth broken by cactus, and an occasional casuarina plantation. A clump of bamboo mingled with the palms and tamarinds lining the route. There was little traffic. On either side the country was submerged and part of the road was under water to the depth of nearly a foot. About a mile further on the car forded a stream. A little more and it ran through a casuarina plantation, the sombre green relieved by the brilliant flame-coloured flowers of the tiger lily.

Over the tops of the trees, to the east, the brown tower of the lighthouse at Seven Pagodas struck a note of exclamation against the clear blue of the sky. A single line of telegraph wire put in a brief appearance and then the road split into a fork. Here a signpost inscribed "D. P. W. Bungalow" pointed to the right. By this time the thoroughfare had deteriorated. Soon regard for the springs of my car led me to abandon her and proceed on foot. Screened by trees a village was discernible a short distance off. For the rest the ground was a flat sandy waste varied by a few boulders, and slabs of pinkish brown rock. There was no shade, and it was burningly hot. Dark against the blue horizon a slender ring of palm trees drew a green circle about the khaki wilderness.

Further progress was barred by the Palar River, where ferrymen were waiting with a large leaky boat. At first I contemplated wading out to it but vivid recollections of a former slimy experience, at the same spot, decided me to let them have their own way and carry me to it. Soon I was aboard, uncomfortably perched on a narrow pole for a seat, while they proceeded to push, tow and pole the clumsy craft in a north-easterly direction, a boy busying himself baling out the water. An idea of the approximate depth of the river could be gained from a woman carrying a heavy load on her head, who was wading across submerged to the waist. About two-thirds over, the boat entered the Buckingham Canal, the sluggish waters of which unite Lake Pulicat with Ennore.

The scene was unique. In the foreground an uneven sandy ridge extended, from north to south,

piled pell-mell with rocks and giant boulders. Palms shot up from the medley. A small square shrine perched on the grey cliff out of which it was carved. Near by rose the modern lighthouse, smooth, and brown and smug, in its neat white cap. It struck a strangely jarring note in an otherwise perfect harmony, for time, working with matchless art, had so brought the works of man into accord with those of nature, that both seemed part of one and the same grand primeval scheme. It was a relief to glance away from the glaring incongruity of the lighthouse to where, through the tall palmyra trees, stood the immortal five Rathas, more eloquent in their eternal silence than the combined clamour of all the modern cities in the world.

Eastward, along an ascending path beside a tangle of undergrowth, bright with the pink blossoms of wild lantana, and butterflies of every size and shape and colour. To right, past great boulders, and elaborately carved monolithic shrines, into the green shade of palmyra trees. East again across the sand, and then, to south, down an avenue of casuarina trees, which strikes through the desert in a long straight line to the square hollow in which lie the wonderful Rathas. At first sight the general effect is somewhat crowded and confused. Protecting winds have piled a sandbank between the shrines and the salt-laden breezes blowing from the sea. Two large split boulders guard the northern approach, almost touching the first of the four temples which stretch in a row from north to south. The fifth stands slightly apart to west. Each is carved out of a gigantic boulder and is distinguished by a lofty and much ornamented roof. All stand upon raised

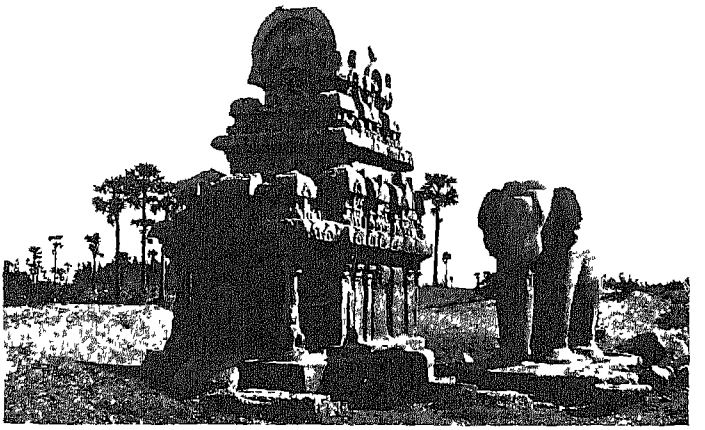


Photo Hael & Klein Madras

NAKULA'S VIMANAM — ONE OF THE FIVE RATHAS, SEVEN PAGODAS

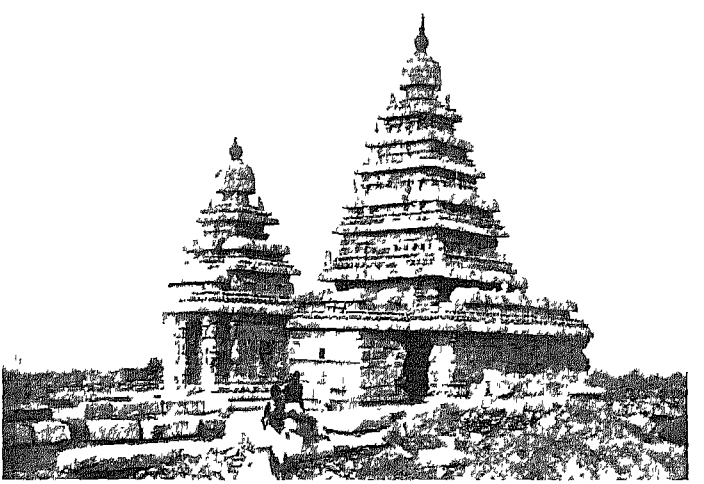


Photo Hael & Klein Madras

SHORE TEMPLE, SEVEN PAGODAS

platforms of rock. Carved figures of Hindu deities cover the exteriors, while, in most cases, the *garbagriha*, or inner sanctum, is singularly bare. Mingling with them, in front and behind, are huge monolithic figures of an elephant, a lion and Nandi, the sacred bull.

The temples are dedicated to the five Pandava princes, whose exploits form the chief theme of the Mahabharata, and to Draupadi, the wife whom they shared in common. Archæologists claim that, despite their Hindu inspiration, the shrines bear strong evidence of Buddhistic influence, but whether the Hindus borrowed from the Buddhists, or vice versa, is a moot point and likely to remain so. The most southerly is the Dharmaraja Ratha. Archaic inscriptions appear on its southern face above the two corner figures. These have been deciphered by Doctor Burnell, and tell how the temple was excavated by the Pallava King Narsinha I, a monarch believed to have reigned in the fifth century A.D.

A long walk across the sand brought me to where, on the very brink of the ocean, lonely, remote, stands the last of the Seven Pagodas. Commonly known as the Shore Temple this is of massive stone and tapers up, from a square base, to a bell-shaped spire. The cella looks seaward and contains finely executed carvings of Siva, with his consort Parvati. The goddess holds their infant son, Subramannia, on her left knee. The figures are characterized by the towering headdresses peculiar to Pallava sculptures. Immediately behind stands a smaller shrine. The dark inner room holds an immense recumbent figure of Vishnu. Excavations have uncovered an outer court enclosed by walls, the tops of which support

closely set figures of bulls. Coins are frequently picked up in the vicinity. While I was there a woman came and offered me a handful of small ones. All were of copper and badly worn, with one exception, a diminutive copper bit, less than the size of a silver two anna piece. It bore the date 1808 and was inscribed "1 Cash." Apparently it came out of one of the East India Company's mints.

The glare was very trying as I tramped over the hot sand to the far-famed cliff, whereon is cut the elaborate scene known as Arjuna's Penance. The entire face of the rock is covered with gods, heroes and animals. The masterpiece is divided down the centre by a great cleft. Even this defect has been turned to advantage by converting it into a shrine for Vasuki, the serpent king, who is depicted with a human body and the tail of a snake, seated under a canopy composed of the hoods of seven cobras. Below sits Ullipi, his daughter, a mermaid figure with three cobras for umbrella of state. To the south Arjuna is shown doing penance to obtain the Pasupparastra, the divine weapon which could alone assure him victory over his enemies. Siva towers near by holding the much-coveted weapon. On the northern panel of the rock all the animals are seen doing penance, notably the cat guilty of having stolen Draupadi's butter ball.

A climb leads up to the top of the ridge dominated by a large unfinished gateway, the Ryala Gopuram, attributed to the Vijianagar dynasty, the paramount power in South India from A.D. 1336 until 1564. This commands a fine view of the old Pallava seaport, which, prior to its English nickname of Seven Pagodas, was styled Mahamalli-

puram. Below the cliff lies the big modern temple to Vishnu and a few dwellings embowered in trees. Beyond again a wide expanse of hot, yellow sand stretches to the lonely old sanctuary, the last of the Seven Pagodas. The sapphire blue sea, scintillating with myriad sunbeams, creeps ominously near, and now and again a venturous wave dashes a shower of white spray against the massive walls.

From the ridge, narrow paths twisted in and out amid rocks, and boulders, to more sculptured shrines, and carved panels, elephant and other animal forms passing Draupadi's butter ball, a huge round boulder perilously poised on the sloping side of a rock. Had the Pallavas not been overthrown by the Chalukyas in the eighth century A.D. it is possible that every stone in the neighbourhood would have been transformed into some curious and beautiful shape. Presently I was joined by a middle-aged man of prosperous appearance, wearing the salmon-coloured habit of a Sadhu. He spoke English fluently, and proceeded to give a graphic account of himself. Among other things I learnt that he had travelled all over India. His last journey had been from Lansdowne, in the far north. Now he was resting from his labours with his good friend, the Zamindar of Mahamallipuram. I can quite imagine that he was a most instructive and entertaining guest, with a wide knowledge of men and matters.

Finally, I bent my steps in the direction of the rest house, drawn thereto by the lure of the tiffin basket. While at lunch I received a visit from a woman carrying an infant on her back, and a round, open basket containing a large and handsome snake fully six feet long, presumably a *python malorus*.

She was most anxious that I should buy it, even going to the length of picking it up and seeking to press it upon me. The old Adam in me was strong, however. Neither the woman nor the serpent could tempt me.

At five o'clock I started to return to Chingleput. It was dark when I reached my journey's end, the Traveller's Bungalow. A faint breeze stirred the many branches in the shadowy compound, shaking down a shower of white blossoms from the tall cork trees. From across the road echoed the laughter of boys finishing their game of football. It was very silent on the dark verandah excepting for the ping ping of mosquitoes. Pleasantly tired, I lay back in a long chair. Soon my thoughts, swiftest travellers on earth, had slipped away to other scenes and New Year's Eves, so true is Goethe's verdict upon the absent-minded that memory brings the distant near, but often estranges the nearest.

The New Year dawned grey, warm and oppressive, to the raucous cawing of innumerable crows. With a solemnity befitting the occasion the *khansama* made a state entry, tray in hand, and presented me with two limes. By 7 a.m. I was out of the bungalow, intent upon renewing my acquaintance with the pretty old town of Chingleput, which, according to local legend, owes its existence to the passionate love of a chieftain for his beautiful wife. The story begins, where most romances end, namely, with her death. The grief-distracted husband had a vivid dream in which he heard a voice command him to collect her ashes and place them in a clay pot. This accomplished he was to wander the earth with them until such time as lotus should burst from

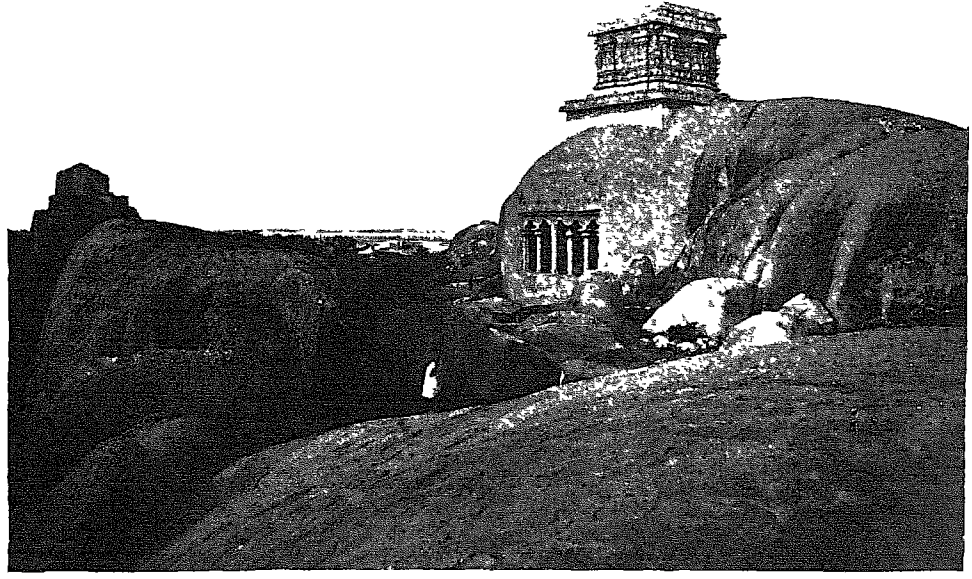


Photo by K. Venu

OLAKKANESVA SWAMI TEMPLE SEVEN PAGODAS

the vessel in full bloom, upon its touching the ground near a lake. Wherever this happened he was to settle and found a city. Such, in brief, is the tradition concerning the origin of Chingleput, or the Lotus Town.

Less picturesque, but more authentic records attribute it to the Pallavas, an ancient dynasty that had its capital at Conjeeveram, twenty-four miles away, and its principal seaport at Mahamallipuram, now commonly known as Seven Pagodas. This nickname was bestowed upon it by old-time mariners, to whom it served as a landmark thanks to the seven stone temples, roofed with burnished copper, which once extended in a long line seawards. From the fall of the Pallavas, in the eighth century, Chingleput changed masters many times. For a period it belonged to the Western Gangas of Mysore, then to the Cholas. In the fourteenth century it was absorbed by the Vijianagar Empire. On the overthrow of that power, in 1565, by the united Muhammadan kings of the Deccan, it passed to a relative of the fugitive Hindu sovereign, who established his capital at Chandragiri in North Arcot. The Governor of Chingleput remained loyal and continued to pay tribute. In 1667 the Carnatic became subject to the Moghul Emperors. Thereafter the entire country was distracted by incessant wars, during the course of which Chingleput suffered numerous attacks. Although transferred to the British East India Company by a deed executed in 1763, and confirmed by the Delhi Emperor two years later, the Lotus Town was not recognized as an integral part of the British possessions until 1801.

On leaving the Traveller's Bungalow I followed the road eastwards for a couple of hundred yards or so. To the left lay the old Christian cemetery safeguarded by substantial walls, an iron gate and serviceable padlock. As I was debating whether to pay it a visit or not, a man appeared key in hand. The interior was crowded with ponderous tombs, trees and weeds, and what looked suspiciously like snake holes. Immediately inside stretched a long walled enclosure with scalloped parapet and three partitions. In the first, stood a large pointed obelisk of gloomy aspect, weather-stained and patterned with moss, to the memory of Frances Coleman, wife of the judge and Magistrate of Chingleput, who died on July 3rd, 1807, aged 28. Below the quaint inscription read—

"Merit demands and grateful memory, with pleasing sadness, pays the last tribute to departed worth."

Near by an equally formidable and awe-inspiring monument weighed upon the frail remains of an infant of nine days. The funeral urn had rolled from the summit of yet another tremendous gravestone, under which slept a year-old baby. Many of the tablets were broken and the lettering illegible. Among the better preserved were two bearing the names of Simon Baillie and Alexander Butson, and the dates 1780 and 1792. On the whole it was a melancholy spot, and I was glad to pass to the comparatively cheerful atmosphere of a small white mosque, and two Muhammadan graves, which trespassed upon the outer wall of the abandoned God's acre.

A narrow path led northward by a second and

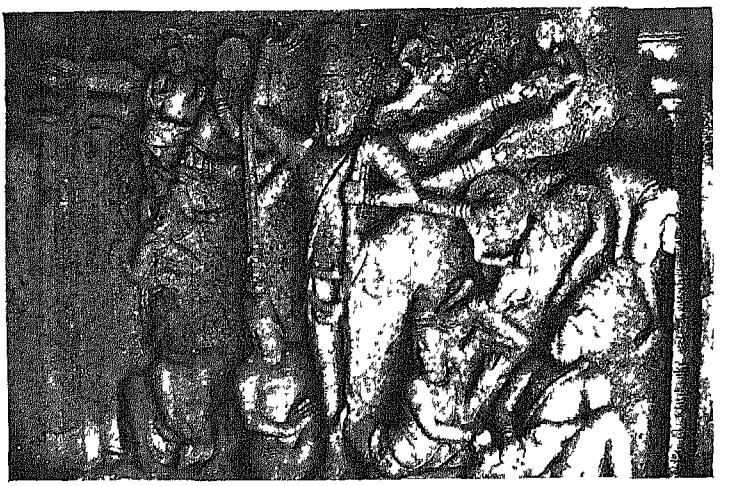


Photo Archaeological Survey of India, Madras

VISHNU AS TRIVIKRAMA, SEVEN PAGODAS

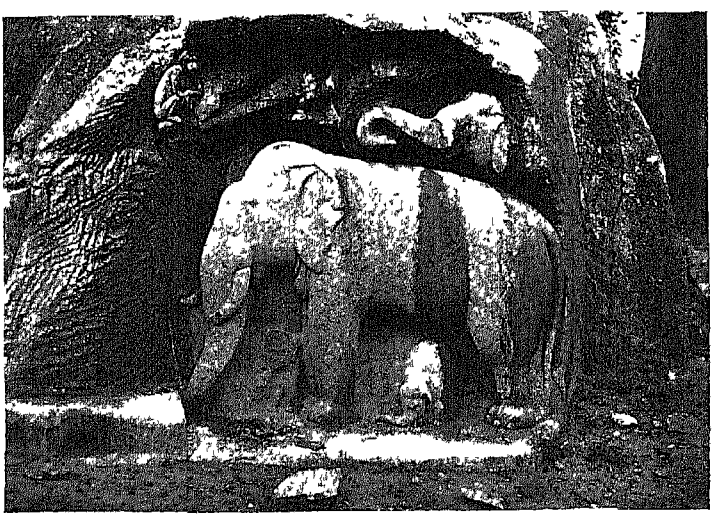


Photo Archaeological Survey of India, Madras

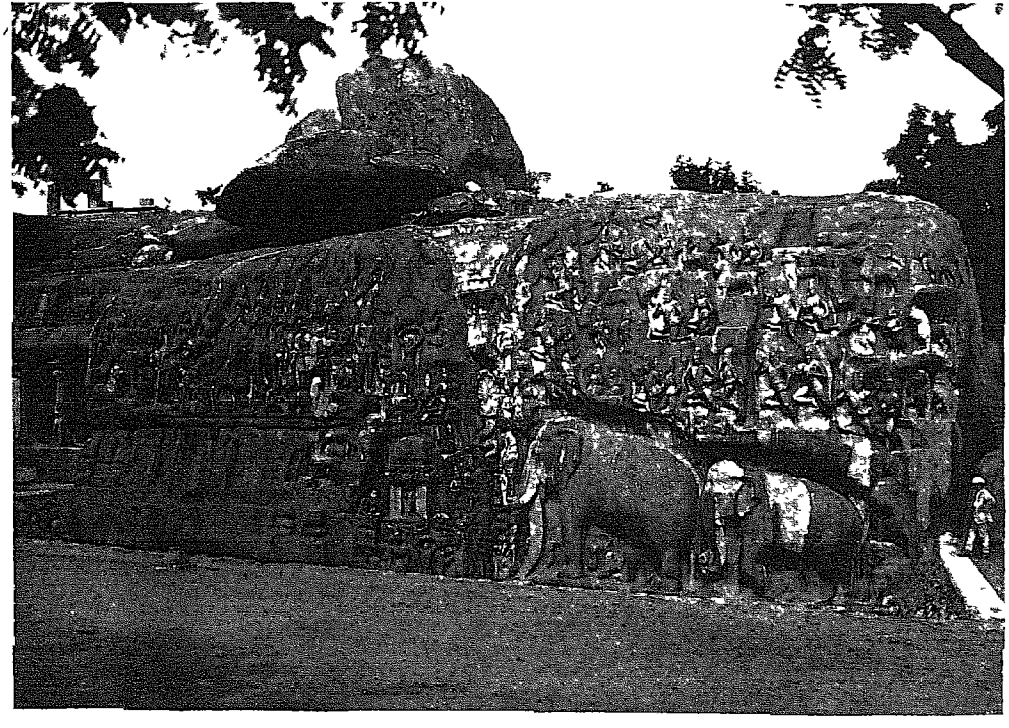
ROCK CARVING AT SEVEN PAGODAS

larger *masjid,* spick and span and spotless in its fresh coat of whitewash. Palms grew in front of it. Behind lay the sleepy grey ramparts of the Fort, watched over by ancient trees. Below slumbered the moat, its stagnant brown water partially hidden by a floating garden of big white lotus.

Although its glories have long since departed, the old stronghold of Chingleput has played a notable part in history, and can afford to rest complacently upon its laurels, knowing them to have been won in many a hard-contested fight. Probably fortifications of some kind occupied the site from a very early age. The present edifice dates from the sixteenth century. It is reputed to have been built by Timmu Raja, a relative of the Vijianagar monarch defeated at Tellacottah in 1565, by the combined Muhammadan kings of the Deccan. The most momentous event in its career occurred in 1639, when its walls witnessed the signing of a deed conveying two insignificant villages, on the Coromandel Coast, to the British East India Company, for the purpose of erecting a factory. Such was the origin of Fort St. George and the present widely-spread city of Madras. In 1751 the stronghold of Chingleput was stormed by the French, but retaken, in September of the succeeding year, by Clive, who followed up this military exploit by sailing for England on sick leave. In the autumn of 1780 Colonel Baillie, and his ill-fated force, were overpowered by the combined armies of Haidar Ali and Tippu Sultan at Perambaukam, near Conjeeveram. Out of forty-six British officers present on the occasion only sixteen survived. Most of these subsequently perished in the dungeons of Seringapatam.

Upon hearing of the disaster Sir Hector Munro, who was to have joined up with Baillie, started to fall back upon Madras. Prior to doing so he flung his heavy guns into the tank at Chingleput.

Now, two lines of railway traverse the Fort, one running to Madras and the other to Conjeeveram. Crossing the track I passed a wooden sentry-box unchallenged, and so through a postern in the second wall. Immediately I was surrounded by an eager group of happy, healthy-looking boys, wearing white uniforms, for, in the many changes which the years have brought about, Timmu Raja's citadel has been converted into a Reformatory. Each lad wore a white forage cap. Attached to the left side of it was the special emblem typifying his particular trade. The embryo tailor sported a small pair of brass scissors, the weaver a shuttle, the blacksmith a hammer, the gardener a spade, and so on. Escorted by a merry throng, which soon developed into a crowd, I visited the barracks, a long white building, of a single storey, with a neat tiled roof. Here a master showed me over the dormitories, each with its double row of string hammocks. Close by were the lock-ups in which new boys sleep during a probationary period of six months. A large two-storeyed building of red brick was also pointed out to me as a barrack. Next I was taken through a delightful compound, where the boys gave an athletic exhibition in my honour. Under a great *pipal* tree stood a small shrine to Ganapati, the elephant-headed *deva*, and, away to north, a *masjid*. Noting the direction of my gaze the master remarked, with a comprehensive gesture: "Here every religion has its God," from which I inferred a spirit of



ARJUNA'S PENANCE—SEVEN PAGODAS

religious toleration in keeping with British traditions in the East.

Eager to do the honours, the boys led me by devious ways to the Ther Mahal, or Car Palace, a graduated white building of curious design and many arches, modelled on the plan of a processional car; hence its name. Once a jealously guarded preserve, sacred to the ladies of the Raja's household, it originally numbered five storeys. Of these only four remain. It was expressly built a certain height in order that, from the roof, the Ranees could catch a glimpse of the Gopurams of Holy Conjeeveram, the Glittering City, when performing their mid-day prayer *pouja*. Abandoned though it now is great *pipal* trees still press about it, and big black velvet butterflies, richly marked with crimson and white, brave the privacy of its echoing arcades, and even penetrate the dim emptiness of its small domed inner rooms.

The deserted white palace woke to sudden life and animation on New Year morning as over two hundred boys scampered barefoot up its narrow outer staircase, swarmed along the bannisters, and perched on the square white roof, in a serried line, parapet-like, against the blue of the sky. A click of the camera and their photograph was taken. To judge from the expression on some faces the experience was a novel one. Then I, too, climbed the eighty odd steps to the flagstaff, pausing on the third floor to peer into the dim religious light of the oratory to St. Aloysius, once a Ranee's bower.

Unfortunately the factory was closed, where the lads made rugs and carpets from the modest price of two rupees upwards. Instead I was shown four

long rows of narrow stone tables, under a leafy roof of banyan and pipal trees, where meals are eaten at 6 a.m., at mid-day, and, finally, at 6 p.m. Truly an ideal refectory. Thereafter the best boy in the school, Vembudain by name, stood at attention, chest out and holding his breath, to be snapshotted. It was a great moment. With this I bade good-bye to as jolly a lot of youngsters as it has been my good fortune to meet anywhere. As I stepped out through the postern, in the old grey rampart, the walls of Timmu Raja's fortress resounded to three ringing cheers. No train was within sight or sound. It was quite safe. I paused on the iron line, waved and shouted back, "Hip! Hip! Hurrah!"

IX

METTUPALAIYAM TO OOTACAMUND BY ROAD

THERE are people who speak disparagingly of time-tables. I am not one of them, particularly as, on several occasions, I have found their prognostications, like those of Old Moore's Almanac, come surprisingly near the mark. A case in point was my recent journey from Madras to Mettupalaiyam. According to the time-table the train was due at the latter place at 9.45 a.m. As a matter of fact it was a little past ten o'clock when the last passenger, the oldest woman I ever remember having seen—an Egyptian mummy excepted—climbed laboriously out of the ladies' compartment and promptly disappeared as completely as Rider Haggard's "She" after emerging from the flames. By this I mean nothing disparaging of the climate of Mettupalaiyam, although it was certainly very hot and shadeless in the little terminal station. Hurriedly consigning my belongings to a heterogeneous collection of coolies, I crossed the line under the very nose of an engine, which snorted derision as I passed. I could afford to ignore its contempt for there, waiting on the dusty highway, in the full glare of the August sun, stood my trusty motor-car.

Since the opening of the Nilgiri Railway, in 1899, comparatively few people elect to make the entire journey from Mettupalaiyam up to Ootacamund

by road. This is particularly the case since the question of petrol has become a vexed one. Another reason is that, although the distance is short, merely a little over thirty-two miles, the ascent is fairly strenuous, taxing the majority of motors pretty severely; nevertheless it is not uncommon to hear the proud owner of a Ford car tell a tale of doing the whole run on top gear. This falling off in traffic, country carts always excepted, accounts no doubt for the inferior state of the first part of the road as compared with the last, the claims of the humble bullock-wagon being taken less seriously than those of the arrogant automobile. Upon starting, the road runs parallel with the railway line for a short distance, then descends and turns sharply to the left. In front the Nilgiris draw an uneven barrier across the hot azure sky. Despite their name of Blue Mountains, they looked refreshingly green from the plain, thanks to the trees which, seemingly, covered them thickly to the very summit. Clouds veiled the peaks of some, rendering them aloof and mysterious as *purdah* beauties of the harem. A little beyond the thirty-second milestone, reckoning from Ootacamund, the road ran through a small bazaar, then past some scattered palms, and across a grey bridge over a broad river, the Bhawani. A brief halt at a toll-gate, where eight annas were demanded, then on again. Some village houses lined the way, with sloping roofs of red tiles, or the more picturesque, if less weatherproof, thatch. Shade was lent by a few trees, chiefly tamarind. A small gaily-coloured Hindu temple put in an unexpected appearance on the left. Against the horizon the mountains stretched in a

semicircle, no longer green but enveloped in the blue haze to which they owe their name. Very soon the road crossed the railway line, then threaded a tortuous course through groves of tall palms. The play of light and shadow, as the sun filtered through the widespread leaves, was something remarkable, carpeting the brown earth with a brilliant and kaleidoscopic pattern. Heralded by a thick cloud of dust, a long procession of bullock-wagons wound slowly into sight, each with a barrel-shaped cover of matting. The road, though uneven and rutted, was very pretty. On either side stretched the palm groves, while immediately on the right was a low creeper-clad wall, a tangled hedge extending along to the left. I halted to cool the engine and pour water into the radiator. Uphill again, and over the boulder-strewn bed of the Kallar River, here spanned by a drawbridge completed in 1894, then back into the dancing lights and shadows of the palms. Ripening bananas and a tall weed, gay with small orange-coloured flowers, trespassed boldly into the mysterious depths of the tope. A little higher up bamboo appeared for the first time by the wayside. Everywhere butterflies flitted joyously, in all sizes and the most brilliant and effective combinations of colour. The road threaded its way amid the many greens of the trees like a ribbon of pale dusty red. Now and again the jungle, which had assumed a varied character, was dominated by a single tree, a veritable Saul of the vegetable kingdom. Bullock-carts in plenty were encountered, and numerous pedestrians, mostly women; such scanty attire as they affected was in rich sombre tones. The majority were bare

to the waist, excepting for bead necklaces and silver bracelets above and below the elbow.

The atmosphere was still oppressively hot and breathless, but the sky was overcast, and only rare patches of deep blue showed between the cloud drifts. Openings in the green trees framed momentary glimpses of the mountains, now a misty sapphire hue as though swathed in gauze. A P.W.D. bungalow was passed on the right. On the opposite side a signboard, inscribed Old Ghat Bridle Road, pointed down a steep path, apparently deserted, for it bore few, if any, signs of traffic. Here the palms ceased. Bamboos grew abundantly and the road improved as it wound upwards clinging to the hillside on the left. A sign bore the legend "1,500 feet," after which driving became a matter of close attention as the curves were frequent and very sharp. The clouds showed darkly on the hilltops as the car swung round to a beautiful and extensive view of sun-illumined plain. It looked very hot and arid, its flat red surface dotted with the occasional dark green of trees, and a few rounded hillocks which seemed as if they were there by mistake. A white cloud had slipped down from the higher mountains, and rested midway as though it were the smoke of a gigantic bonfire or a crater. Every detail stood out clearly defined in the searching radiance of the sun. Near the twenty-fifth milestone I noted the first of those triangular red warning posts which show up at irregular intervals the remainder of the way. The soil at this point is of a reddish heliotrope, very similar to that characteristic of the Jhelum Valley road leading to

Baramula, in Kashmir. An abrupt turn, and another view of the red sunlit plain, the train puffing laboriously across it pursued by a trail of white smoke. The green heads of the palms appeared as level as a billiard table. As the road curved higher, diminutive wooden bridges followed each other in rapid succcssion, negotiating innumerable *nalas* dry as the proverbial bone. Trees and undergrowth grew thickly, likewise moss, maiden hair and other fern. At 2,000 feet it was again necessary to cool the engine and renew the water in the radiator. I availed myself of the opportunity to take a snapshot. A small rill, clear and sparkling, flowed along the side of the road nearest the cliff. Above it rose a mighty rock of a pale heliotrope colour, trees and fern growing where they could find root-hold. From far below, in the hidden depths of the tree-clad *khud*, came the murmur of rushing water. At a particularly acute corner a flock of goats threatened to run into the car. Panic-stricken they disappeared down the precipice instead. Half a mile further on, a red iron bridge spanned an almost dry and rocky river bed. A little more and a scarlet flag signalled Baraliya toll-gate, picturesquely set beside an immense grey boulder shaped like an elephant. Can it be a fossilized mammoth of the pre-glacial period? Near by were a couple of small houses embowered in the green of trees, principally palms, *papaya* and *pummelo*, the latter weighted with big fruit seemingly far too heavy for its slender branches. The sound of a mountain stream fell refreshingly upon the ear as the toll-keeper came forward to demand eight annas. Simultane-

ously the presiding deity of the fruit stall, a comely damsel in crimson dress and yellow *sari*, proffered a dozen *mangosteen* for two rupees. In curious contrast to the peaceful scene a sudden throbbing sound was heard overhead. A trail of white smoke filtered through the green branches of the trees as the train puffed along on its iron rails. I halted to empty a two-gallon petrol tin and refill it with water, having previously been warned that none of the precious liquid would be available for a considerable distance, and that the road was hot and steep, with many a sharp twist and awkward curve. Reluctantly, at last, I left the sylvan glade to the toll-keeper, the butterflies and iridescent dragon-flies, the gauze-like wings of the latter having, in some mysterious way, caught and held the prismatic hues of the rainbow. About a hundred yards higher up, on the right, stands Baraliya *chuttram*, a yellow building, near neighbour to a brilliant tree of scarlet flowers and dark green leaves, at an altitude of 2,500 feet. The air had become clear and invigorating, but the crystal rill bordering the road had degenerated into a muddy streamlet. Nearer approach revealed the mountain heights, which, from the plains, had appeared clothed in verdant forest, to largely consist of bald patches of grey rock, seamed and scarred, trees growing where they could secure roothold.

Beyond the twenty-first milestone the road curves round to command another radiant view of the red plain bathed in golden sunlight. Here the tall skeleton of a tree catches the eye, looking rather like a mast of a ship, as it stands stricken and dead, but

still erect, by the wayside. Near by, a woman, armed with a brass bowl, was engaged in the somewhat profitless task of laying the dust by sprinkling the road freely with water from the before-mentioned muddy streamlet. Two female stone-breakers watched her efforts as they munched great pieces of jack-fruit. Soon afterwards Benhope inspection bungalow came into sight, a yellow building looking down upon the highway to right. Here bananas flourished and scarlet poinsettia, and the ripple of invisible water sounded rather like the rustling of the wind amid autumn leaves. Thereafter frequent red triangular posts gave timely warning of a series of really nasty corners. Trees and tangled undergrowth grew thickly at both sides of the road, as did a decorative creeper with mauve flowers shaped like convolvulus. Again the plain flashed into sight, its brilliant sunlit expanse now veiled by a faint blue haze transparent as gossamer.

A couple of thatched roofs marked Benhope toll-gate, further dignified by a bazaar extending along to the left. Here another eight annas is required of the motorist. Four thousand feet find the road picturesquely overhung with rocks, ferns, moss and a profusion of wild flowers, scarlet, orange and purple. It winds sharply upwards, and thrice crosses a mountain torrent, which falls in a succession of cascades with a splashing sound hauntingly reminiscent of monsoon rain. At the fifteenth milestone telegraph poles put in a brief appearance. To left lies what seems to be a wilderness, but a large sign-board bears the imposing title " Coffee Hybridisation Experimental Plantation." Beyond, on the same

side, red and white flags flutter above an ornate Muhammadan tomb, its white surface covered by a pall of flowers.

The fourteenth milestone registers an altitude of 4,500 feet and looks down, for a short distance, upon the railway line. To right a narrow zig-zag path bears the sign "Tiger Rock," once a favourite picnic resort. Its chief features are two caves, an inner and an outer, and a fine view of the Ghat road, the Kaiti Valley and hills beyond. Although its name seems to promise a story, possibly a tragedy, no more romantic explanation is forthcoming than that it was once inhabited by a panther. To right of the main road a grass-grown lane leads downhill to Runymede Station.

Soon a mountain torrent, plentifully strewn with big boulders, is crossed by a red iron bridge, named after Lord Wenlock and opened on June 7, 1892. On the opposite side of the valley the steep side of the mountain is ruled across with neat lines of tea bushes, irregularly punctuated with picturesque patches of grey rock. At 5,000 feet a large red sign-board displays the warning "Corner Dangerous." Kateri Road Station was passed on the left. A few minutes later I sighted a black cotton umbrella skilfully balanced upon three tall sticks. Beneath this canopy of state squatted what I took to be a *fakir*.. A nearer view dispelled this illusion of sanctity. The supposed holy man turned out to be a stone-breaker leisurely plying his trade with that contempt for time which has always appealed to the truly philosophical. His two assistants were sound asleep on the pile beside him, although

it can hardly have been a bed of roses. Sufferers from insomnia are welcome to the hint. A sign-board pointed northwards to Hulicul, Kateri and Kullakuly, and eastwards to Coonoor. At this juncture a long train of wagons wound slowly into view. The horns of the bullocks were elaborately brass-tipped, and each animal sported a gay neck-band. On to where a low stone wall girded the road to right, flanked by a row of tall dark fir trees. To left nestled ferns, moss and a starry flower resembling a small michaelmas daisy. Round a corner marked "Dangerous" the firs drew a protecting line between the thoroughfare and a foaming river, which gushed impetuously from under a small grey masonry bridge of a single arch, where a shepherd, in a brilliant orange-coloured shawl, struck a bright note of colour as he urged his unwilling flock across. In the middle distance rose Coonoor, a cluster of tile-roofed houses dominated by a big grey church, its rather flat façade flanked by twin spires. Behind, on the crest of the hill, tall, sad-coloured eucalyptus trees showed grey-green against the blue sky.

So much for the first impression of Coonoor. Of the town itself, it seemed a somewhat insignificant picture glorified by a beautiful frame. Once past the railway station the road winds upwards in a westerly direction. A picturesque path of many steps, reminiscent of Italy, ascends the hill to left between small red houses. Hills come into view with rounded tops, and the smoothest and greenest of grass. Khaki-clad soldiers saunter leisurely along, and the hoot of the motor-car is frequently

heard in the land. Through Wellington, its bazaar boasting a Muhammadan *musjid* in addition to a Hindu temple. By this time the face of the country has changed completely. Eucalyptus grows everywhere, a palpable foreigner to the soil where, however, it has multiplied exceedingly. In striking contrast to the tall melancholy trees are their offshoots, small and brightly coloured, their spiked leaves of a vivid frosted blue. Fields of barley show pale yellow in the sunshine. The earth is a warm red and the air cold enough to justify an overcoat. Outside the high yellow gate of the cordite factory a crowd was gathered. Conspicuous among the many was the blue-clad figure of a policeman, a touch of crimson fringe enlivening his *puggari*. A glimpse was visible of red buildings surrounded by a spacious compound, and of a British sentry in khaki, with fixed bayonet. The factory dates from 1904.

Still ascending, the road passed a eucalyptus *shola* on the left. On the right lay a hilly ridge, grass-grown and sparingly dotted with low bushes. More trees, and some tall aloes bursting into fatal bloom, then a colony of red buildings above the highway to right, the Rose and Crown brewery at Kaiti. Some partridge flew out from the shadowy recess of a dark wattle *shola*, the trees aglow with fragrant yellow mimosa flowers, then came the fourth and last toll-gate. At 7,500 feet the road began to descend to Ootacamund, the famous hill station, the site of which was discovered by two civilians, Messrs. Whish and Kindersley, in 1819. In April 1822 Mr. Sullivan, the Collector of Coimbatore,

began to erect the first European residence to which he gave the name of Stonehouse. Sir Frederick Price quotes an anecdote concerning it told to him by the Rev. C. Kofoed, a Danish missionary long resident in the Nilgiris. According to the latter, an influential Toda, known as Parthkai, lived at Old Ooty. In common with other well-to-do men of his tribe he followed the custom of having a single stone set up at a certain distance from his house. Here he placed the offerings for his *Guru*, or religious preceptor, who would not accept anything from his hand as such contact would have entailed pollution, the laity and priesthood never mingling. When Mr. Sullivan visited the *mund* the Todas received him by the stone, which is said to have stood on the site afterwards occupied by Stonehouse. They greeted him with the words: "Yolloke a maundu," otherwise: "Take this stone village." *Ootakal* is the Tamil for a single stone. Such is the origin claimed by a few for the present name of the station. Curiously enough, among the Todas themselves, the place has always been styled Pathkmund, and the hut, demolished to make way for Mr. Sullivan's residence, was called *Whottlmund*. He paid the Todas a hundred rupees for the property, which worked out at about one rupee per acre. Sir Thomas Munro was the first Governor of Madras to visit the station, paying it a brief visit of three days' duration in September 1826. The suggestion of the annual emigration of Government to Ootacamund emanated from Sir William Dennison (1861–66). Government House was established in 1879, the Duke of Buckingham person-

ally superintending the building and design. In 1831 Lord Macaulay spent three months in Ooty. Upon arrival, the distinguished compiler of the Indian Penal Code was received by Lord Bentinck in the house belonging to Sir William Rumbold, now converted into the Ootacamund Club.

X

THE TODAS

ALTHOUGH poet, prosewriter, ethnologist, archæologist and missionary have in turn sought to solve the mystery of their past, the Todas continue more or less of an unknown quantity. Dwelling high up in the Nilgiris their remarkable appearance, mode of life and unique customs single them out as unlike any existing tribe in Southern India, or elsewhere. They themselves can throw no light on their past. When questioned regarding any particular custom men and women alike reply, "It is habit." At one time their claim to supremacy over neighbouring tribes inclined to the belief that they were aborigines. This theory was discarded upon the discovery of primitive stone remains of temples, and enclosures whereof the Todas had no cognisance, and towards which they were utterly indifferent. The inference is that the relics date from a still earlier race which either died out or emigrated.

In the language of the Badagas, a neighbouring tribe, *Toda* signifies herdsman, hence, no doubt, the origin of the term. That of the mountain range, to which the Todas claim overlordship, is equally easily traced, consisting as it does of two Sanskrit words *nilam*, blue, and *giri*, hill, a poetical

appellation probably inspired by the sapphire coloured haze which appears to hang over the mountains, veiling them from dwellers in the plain.

Many theories have been hazarded regarding the particular district to which the Todas may be assigned as indigenous. One writer on the subject favours the sunburnt side of the Ghats. In support of his claim he quotes certain peculiarities of speech, and argues that the Todas are unusually dark-skinned for hill people. Miss Ling, a member of the Church of England Zenana Mission, who has worked for many years among the tribe, and is the author of a dictionary to their language, disagrees with this, declaring that the Todas are comparatively fair, a statement to which she adds the significant qualification "when washed"! She inclines to Dr. Rivers' view that they have more in common with the inhabitants of the West Coast, the Malayalis, than with either the Tamils or the Canarese.

Whatever their country of origin their nomadic instincts led the Todas to wander in search of "fresh fields and pastures new" until they reached the Nilgiris. Finding ideal conditions for their buffaloes they established themselves in the rich grassy uplands of which they form so picturesque and romantic a feature. The advance of civilization has affected them so little that they are to-day probably much what they were at the beginning of time. The twentieth century sees in them a prehistoric survival of a tribe that peopled the earth in the shadowy ages of the mammoth and the diplodocus. Apparently they reached a certain degree of development and then stopped. This, no doubt,



TODA MAN, OOTACAMUND



KASHMIRI WOMAN OF THE PUNDIT CLASS *Frost & Sharp*

may be attributed to the fact that the locality, in which they settled, sufficed for all their needs. They lacked the stimulus of necessity, "mother of invention," which sharpens men's wits by forcing them to get the better of environment or perish. The Todas are probably unique in that they have never tilled the soil nor planted a vegetable. Like the lily of the field they "toil not, neither do they spin." Dwelling amid game forests they do not hunt, nor do they fish in the many streams. From time immemorial their sole occupation has been to tend their buffaloes. Of these they possess an uncommonly fine species. At night they confine them in an enclosure safeguarded by rough stone walls. Soon after dawn they drive them out to graze at will, while daylight lasts, on the rich grass for which the Nilgiris are famous.

Eating neither meat nor vegetables the herdsmen subsist almost entirely on milk and butter. To this diet they add a modicum of rice, *ragi* or a small kind of millet, cooked in butter or milk. They are also partial to wild fruit, which they pluck freely. From their neighbours, the Badagas, they receive a tribute of grain in acknowledgment of Toda overlordship, basing their claim to such upon the assertion that they were first upon the ground. It is extremely problematical whether this argument bears much weight with the Badagas. What does impress them, and finally induces payment of the tribute, is fear of the magic practised by the Todas, who enjoy a formidable reputation as diviners and sorcerers. Celebrated though the herdsmen are in this respect their powers pale before those wielded by the Kurumbers, a neighbouring

tribe regarded as past masters of the Black Art and greatly feared.

In appearance the Toda is wild to a degree but there is nothing savage nor uncanny about him. As a rule he is characterized by good features and a dreamy, almost childlike expression. His nose is aquiline, his mouth large and full-lipped with very white teeth, while his really beautiful eyes are hazel, or brown and of unusual size and brilliancy. Quite the most remarkable point about him is his mop of glossy black hair. This he regards as his crowning glory. He lavishes much care upon it, anointing it copiously with butter and curling it round a stick. He allows it to hang down on his shoulders, where it is cropped straight across and stands out like a mane. His full beard receives an equal measure of attention. When both are curled and oiled his eyes gleam through the mass of shiny black ringlets as though peering out from the depths of a bush. His figure is tall and slight. He dresses in a *languti*, or loin cloth and a sheet of coarsely woven cotton, the ends bordered with bands of blue and red neatly darned in a conventional pattern by the women of the tribe. This he wears, toga fashion, wound round the body, one extremity being flung over the left shoulder; the right arm and the legs being left free. Generally speaking nothing is worn on the head. Sometimes the chief men don turbans when coming into town, or in honour of some special occasion.

In manner the Toda is frank and dignified. He does not shun strangers and is fearless in his intercourse with them. The camera has no terrors for

him, and he willingly poses for his photograph, but he refuses to allow his buffaloes to be snapshotted. Although intercourse between him and any European is, of necessity, limited to pantomime, owing to ignorance of each other's language, he extends a friendly welcome to visitors, laughing, gesticulating and gladly entering into any game.

Toda women are considered less good-looking than the men. In spite of this verdict some of the younger ones are distinctly pretty. Their expression, too, is more alert and they show themselves bright and intelligent. Unfortunately they age rapidly. As they get older they wrinkle, and their features harden until they appear to bear a decided family resemblance to the Maori women of New Zealand, and also to the Red Indian squaws of North America.

In common with the men they are characterized by long and luxuriant hair which they curl, anoint with butter and wear hanging down the back. Their single garment consists of a dirty white sheet bordered with blue and red bands. Their mode of draping it is very similar to that adopted by the men. They, too, leave one shoulder bare, otherwise the body is entirely covered : the most rigid purist could find nothing to object to. Those who are mothers are distinguished by green or blue tattoo marks. Little circles are pricked on the chin. These are repeated on the chest, shoulders and back so as to form a necklace.

Between them the community possess a good deal of jewellery. The men affect gold ear-rings and silver chains round their *dhotis*. Silver necklaces,

composed of coins, are common among the women, who also wear heavy brass armlets, rings and earrings. A curious custom is the wearing of two bunches of *cowrie* shells, one at the nape of the neck and the other attached to a bracelet above the left elbow. Evidently these are intended as some sort of charm. When questioned concerning them the answer is the inevitable, "It is habit."

Most probably the Todas were never a numerous people even in the days when they had the Blue Hills entirely to themselves and were virtually monarchs of all they surveyed. No restraint has been put upon them. They are still free to wander where they will with their buffaloes, nevertheless the vicinity of civilization is inimical to them and they are dying out. The last census gave their entire population as seven hundred and sixty. This is not surprising. Theirs is the fate common to all primitive tribes. Apparently it is a law of nature that primeval man and his modern brother may not dwell together.

Although frequently alluded to as nomads the Todas can hardly be so classed. They are neither tent dwellers such as the Arabs, nor do they move from place to place in caravans like the gipsies. As a matter of fact they inhabit little villages known as *mands*, comprising two or three huts, a cattle pen and a dairy. All the members of a *mand* are related. They invariably possess two or three other settlements of a similar description, to which they promptly migrate in the event of a death.

Their villages are eminently picturesque, situated as they usually are in a grassy clearing ringed round



TODA WOMEN, OOTACAMUND

with trees. The diminutive dwellings cluster in a group and rather suggest gigantic beehives. The walls are plastered with mud. Those at the sides rise three feet to meet a high wagon-shaped roof of bamboo thatched with dried grass, and neatly finished off round the eaves with a border of plaited bamboo. There is only one entrance which is generally in front. Occasionally, however, it may be found at the side. It closes hermetically by means of a sliding inner door of wood from four to six inches thick. As it is only two feet high and eighteen inches wide it is necessary to stoop down and crawl in on all fours. Luckily there are no stout people among the Todas.

Near every entrance is a small hole about eight inches deep. This serves the purpose of mortar. Grain is thrown into it and pounded with a large wooden pestle.

The interior of a hut measures anything from fifteen to eighteen feet square. It consists of a single room. One side is occupied by the sleeping place, a low clay bed spread with the skins of deer or buffalo; at the other wood is piled up to the ceiling. A raised earthen platform, at one end, is used as a shelf for cooking utensils of a primitive kind. The floor does duty as fireplace. There is no egress for the smoke, and the sloping roof makes it impossible for any one to stand erect excepting in the middle of the room. When the family is assembled, the fire lighted and the sliding door closed for the night the atmosphere can be more easily imagined than described. During the day men are rarely seen in the immediate neighbourhood of the *mands*.

They go off with their buffaloes soon after dawn and do not return until sunset. Meanwhile the women remain idle. There are only two meals to prepare—breakfast and supper, neither of which calls for a very great deal of labour. Occasionally a woman may be seen darning a coloured pattern along the edge of a sheet destined for one of the men.

On the whole it may truthfully be said of the Todas that the only time they work is when they play. They are experts at several games, notably one called *Ilata*, a variety of tipcat. For this they use a species of rolling-pin, pointed at both ends, and a bat. *Nathpima* is another popular sport, in evidence of which a couple of boulders, set thirty feet apart, are to be found near most *mands*. Further on still is a low stone table. At a given signal a man darts from the near boulder, followed by another from the second, and endeavours to wriggle under the table before caught.

Some sixty feet from each village a conical pile of stones marks the boundary limit beyond which women must not pass. Although free to roam in other directions they are forbidden to approach the dairy, which is also the temple and treated as holy ground. Through an interpreter I once questioned a Toda as to what would happen should this rule be infringed. It took some while for the full purport of so surprising an enquiry to penetrate his slow-working intelligence. When it did a troubled look crept into his eyes. He replied, in an awed tone, "Misfortune."

So far as outer aspect is concerned the dairy

differs little from the other houses of the *mand* except that it is slightly larger, better built and occupies an isolated site in the centre of a circular depression, walled round with stones to a height of three feet. The enclosure is pierced by triple openings barely wide enough for a man to squeeze through. None ever enters but the priest and his attendant. The interior of the temple is rumoured to consist of two apartments. In the first of these the priest lives with his assistant. The second is the sanctum sanctorum, which he never enters, merely putting his hand through a small aperture to perform the rites of worship.

It has been claimed that each *mand* has its presiding deity, who is represented by a small brass image in the local shrine. Miss Ling believes this statement to be erroneous. She has frequently questioned Todas on the subject and they have invariably replied in the negative. Even Toda converts to Christianity have denied the presence of any such figure in their temples, and they could have no reason for concealing the truth.

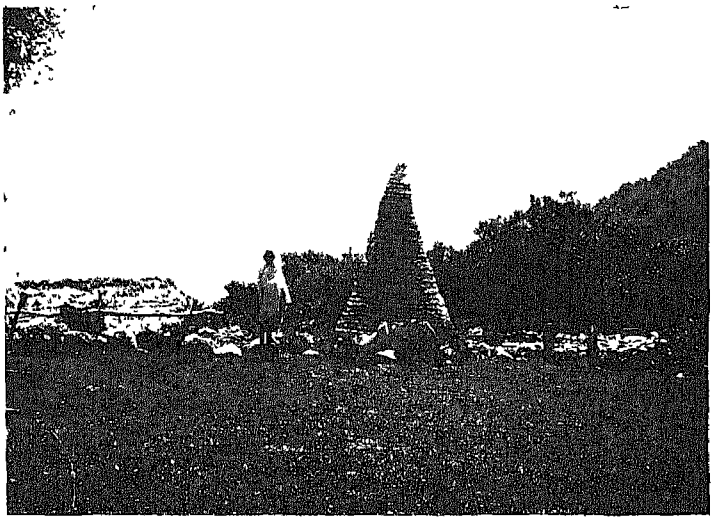
Although held in veneration, and even awe, the sanctuaries are not places of general worship. Going to church is unknown. The Todas never assemble in them for prayer, and the same is true of their four principal *boas* or temples. Of these the largest is known locally, among Europeans, as the Toda Cathedral. Typical of the other three, this occupies a lonely and very beautiful site on the downs six miles from Ootacamund. It is thirty feet high and stands in a circular enclosure ringed round with stones. In design it suggests a gigantic

fool's cap built up of bamboo overlaid with layer upon layer of thatch. Crowning all is a boulder.

The lonely situation, the wide sweep of rolling green only bounded by the horizon, the curious, conical sanctuary, the mystery and, above all, the silence make a powerful appeal to the imagination. There it stands, no sentinel to guard it, no *darwara palaka* beside its door, none the less it would take a very bold spirit to penetrate that mystical circle of stones and venture within that inviolable shrine.

The Tiriares or Bell Temples are counted the most holy, being the repositories of the bells belonging to the sacred buffalo herd. They are built in different parts of the hills and are carefully watched over by black-robed priests.

Just why the Todas attach such significance to their shrines is not clear, for all are used for secular purposes, *i. e.* as dairies. The Todas are accounted singularly free from religious beliefs. Miss Ling speaks of them as possessing an elaborate ritual, but adds that they know nothing of its meaning. A few old men salute the rising sun and the moon, and fast during an eclipse, but invoke no deity, worship none and do not, apparently, seek help from any higher power. Upon emerging from their huts in the morning some of the women murmur, "May it be well with the buffaloes! May all be well!" Their creed, such as it is, embraces faith in a hereafter and in heaven and hell, for which they have words in their language. They regard the different peaks of the Nilgiris as being their heroes deified. It is a moot point whether they share the belief, common to the old religions, in reincarnation.



TODA "CATHEDRAL" AT NODRS, OOTACAMUND



TODA HOUSE, OOTACAMUND

In this connection it is told how they imagine that on quitting the body the spirit of a Toda leaps from Mukarti point, a neighbouring mountain, followed by those buffaloes sacrificed at his funeral to provide him with nourishment, while in the "Other District." His stay there depends on his legs. When these wear down to the knee he must return to the earth for the space of another existence.

If they really hold such a superstition it would point to their having inherited the ancient doctrine of metempsychosis together with a ritual, of which they have retained the form, but forgotten the significance.

The emblem, which they hold in greatest reverence, is the bell belonging to the chief buffalo of the sacred herd. This is regarded as typifying Hariadeva, the supreme being to whom the various village deities are subordinate.

Socially the Todas are divided into two castes, the Teivaliol and the Thartharol. These eat together but do not intermarry. Should they do so the union is regarded as irregular. The Teivaliol is subdivided into four clans, namely the Melgars, Kurs, Nodes and Pans, and the Thartharol into six, the Tarachs, Kerardes, Kanodes, Kuvordenis, Pams and Nideirs.

The *Palols*, or Chief Priests, are drawn from the Teivalal caste and held to be divinely inspired. They dwell apart in sacred groves and guard the Tirieres, or Bell Temples. Women may not venture anywhere near, and men can only address them from a distance. None dare touch a *Palol*. Even his own father must bow down before him. For

attendant he has another ascetic, but of vastly inferior sanctity. Both are married men. Their celibacy begins and ends with their term of priestly office.

Before entering on his spiritual career a *Palol* serves a rigorous probation. It is said that his first act is to withdraw deep into the *shola* (forest). Here he strips off all clothing and proceeds to fast for forty days. Every morning he squeezes juice from the bark of the sacred *tude* tree (Mullingteria) into a leaf filled with fresh spring water. Raising the improvised cup reverently to his forehead, by way of salutation, he drinks the contents. This done he waves the empty leaf round his head and deposits it on the ground behind him. Next he rubs himself all over with the bark, rinsing in a stream. The curious rite is repeated thrice daily. At the end of the month he puts on a scanty black garment and assumes his priestly duties. These are confined to tending the sacred herd, the milk from which belongs to him and his assistant.

A great distinction exists between the long-haired, black-garbed *Palol* of a Tiriere, and the priest of an ordinary dairy temple. The former often continues in the holy office for years, whereas the latter is frequently changed. It is no uncommon thing for a boy to assume charge of the village sanctuary, as older men are averse to the restrictions which the life imposes. Both classes of priest divest themselves of all clothing while performing the duties of their sacred calling.

The *Palol* takes no part in the concerns of the community, avoiding the haunts of men. He does

not bless the marriage tie, nor does he perform any rite over the newly born. Possibly these omissions may, in some degree, be accounted for by the practice of polyandry common among the Todas. Upon the birth of a son his reputed father carries the infant to the door of the *Paltchi* (sacred dairy). Here the man prostrates himself. Simultaneously the boy is given a name by his maternal grandfather. In the case of girls no ceremony is observed.

Thanks to the ancient custom of smothering female infants women are in the minority. A marriageable girl commands a good price, five and even more buffaloes being paid for her. A wedding is a very simple affair, once the bargain has been struck between the bride's father and the bridegroom elect. The giving of a cloth, and the exchange of buffaloes is regarded as ratification of the match. This done the bride sinks to the ground and her husband places each foot in turn upon her head, the usual mode of salutation among the Todas. Young women always bow down before men. In the case of an old woman the order is reversed. She puts her feet on the man's head.

The one great ceremonial of a Toda's life is that connected with his exit from it. When about to die his relatives press about him adorning him with all the jewellery which they can muster between them. As he draws his last breath they hold milk to his lips. The lifeless form is enveloped in a new cloth specially provided with pockets filled with sufficient grain to last him on his journey to Amnur.

The corpse is not immediately disposed of. Sometimes it is kept as many as five or six days. When

lifted out through the low door of the dwelling it is placed on a bier made from boughs. Relatives carry it swiftly to the nearest *methgudi*, or burning *ghat*, generally some miles distant. Meanwhile runners have been despatched to notify the entire tribe and bid them attend the obsequies. Eventually all assemble. Several buffaloes, belonging to the deceased, are also present, each adorned with a bell in honour of the solemnity, which is known as the green funeral.

As soon as the pyre is ready the body is laid upon it. The buffaloes are driven close up while the mourners cry out, "*Go with him!*" In the same breath all, down to the smallest child, take three handfuls of earth and throw them towards the animals. Thereafter they drop earth three times upon the bier repeating: "Let him go into the soil!" Next, the relatives raise the dead man, guiding his right hand until it touches each of the buffaloes on the horns. The jewellery is then removed and the body swung thrice from side to side. Fire is obtained by friction and the body placed, face downwards, upon the flames, the mourners calling out in chorus: "May all your sins go! You are leaving for Amnur! May it be well with you! We slay buffaloes for you!"

A couple of the buffaloes are then felled. As the animals drop the people crowd about them weeping, wailing and kissing the creatures' faces. They crouch around the pyre in pairs, irrespective of sex, their foreheads pressed together lamenting their loss.

When the fire has burnt to the last flickering



TODA VILLAGE, OOTACAMUND



TODA HUT AT MAKHACAMUND, BEHIND GOVERNMENT GARDENS, OOTACAMUND

ember the assemblage salute the spot and withdraw, leaving the ashes to be scattered by the four winds. From that hour the dead is never named, although a finger-nail, and a lock of hair attached to a fragment of scalp, have been piously preserved. So much for the green funeral.

Six months, or a year later follows the dry funeral. This is an even more impressive ceremony, and is generally postponed until several members of the tribe have died so that all may be suitably honoured together. The elaborate programme covers two days and is of a character to appeal strongly to an emotional people.

On the first day the Todas gather near one of their *kedmanies*, or funeral houses. Each clan possess two of these primitive mortuary chapels, one for men and the other for women. Architecturally there is nothing to distinguish them from ordinary dwellings. For a funeral, however, they are brightly decorated. The scene in general suggests a fair. Musicians are present from other hill tribes, notably the Kotas. Sweetmeats are on sale and there are singing and dancing.

The ceremony only really commences when the buffaloes intended for slaughter are driven into the cattle-pen. Two are assigned to every departed Toda. Divesting themselves of their *putkulis*, or sheets, the young men rush in among the animals attaching a bell to the neck of each. As this is done the women begin to weep and wail.

The obsequies take place on the second day. The remains are brought out wrapped in a new cloth and placed inside the wall encircling the mortuary.

Meanwhile the men collect and shout: "May the calves and buffaloes be well!" Each approaches, and laying his hand on the cloth enveloping the finger nail, lock of hair and fragment of scalp preserved from the green funeral, bows to the ground, saluting them with his forehead. The remains are then removed to where a hole has been dug, near the entrance to the cattle-pen, a circular enclosure roughly walled round with loose stones. Taking a handful of earth the relatives ask, "May I throw earth?" This is answered in the affirmative by the *Pujari*, a specially appointed member of the higher caste, who responds, "Throw earth!" At this the relatives toss earth on to the bier first, and afterwards in the direction of the buffaloes, and the *Pujari* proceeds to fling garlands of flowers into the cattle-pen. This is the signal for slaughter. The animals are rapidly despatched and the carcases dragged into line with the human remains.

Next a buffalo and a calf are brought forward. The former is felled by a blow between the horns and gashed under the forelegs. As the warm blood gushes forth pieces of bark are dipped into it and distributed among the relatives of the deceased, who take them and smear the remains exclaiming: "May thy sins vanish!"

A man of the higher caste proceeds to invest himself with the winding sheet and a silver necklace. Picking up a bow he strings several arrows, as though about to shoot, dips the arrow heads into the blood, and exclaims: "Shall I give a bow?" The fragments of blood-stained bark are then collected and placed in a bowl made of leaves. This

is given to a *varzhal,* or assistant priest. A procession forms up in the rear. As he advances he throws pieces of bark behind him, bit by bit. The *Pujari* walks in the middle carrying the bow and arrows. The cortege wends its way to a large stone near the mortuary. As this is reached the calf is let loose. All start in pursuit. Every few paces the runners fall flat on their faces. Striking the ground with the forehead they cry loudly, "May he enter Heaven! May it be well with his good deeds and his sins!"

At four o'clock on the following morning a fire is lighted inside a small ring of stones. Here the remains are finally consigned to the flames together with a bow and three arrows, a palm-leaf umbrella, an axe, a sickle, some *jaggery* and a little *gram.* All the while the Todas sit huddled together in pairs, forehead to forehead, wailing piteously. Their despairing cries mingle with the weird discordant notes of the Kota musicians, making a concert worthy of lost souls in Hades.

As dawn begins to break, grey, ghostly and chill, the music ceases, and with it the wailing. Motionless and dumb the mourners crouch over the dying embers. There is a hissing sound, as water is poured over the last red sparks, and then a great hush. Silently the big boulder guarding the entrance to the circle is rolled aside revealing a hollow. Into this the ashes are laid and the boulder, now a gravestone, is rolled back into place.

Suddenly a dim shape steals through the gloom. Near the ring he halts, raises a *chatty* high above him and dashes it down upon the stone. A hundred

fragments scatter with a crash. He bends down until his forehead touches the spot. Then he turns. Silently and swiftly he came. Swiftly and silently he goes. Behind him lie the night and the dead as he steps forward to salute the dawn.

XI

OOTACAMUND TO MADRAS VIA MYSORE

PRIMED with much inaccurate information, proffered by various well-meaning people, regarding the road and all pertaining thereto, I started to motor from Ootacamund to Madras at 9.15 on a recent fine September morning. It would have been difficult to have imagined a more perfect day. A cool breeze tempered the clear golden sunshine. The sky, of a brilliant blue in patches, was flecked with fleecy white and silver clouds.

Leaving the club behind on the left, I ran, with a warning "toot toot," into a party of Todas. They were in festive mood, and kept on shouting "How! How!" in joyous chorus. Their bushy black hair and long beards were carefully curled and glistened with *ghi*. An unaccustomed cleanliness distinguished their toga-like draperies of unbleached sheeting, the ends effectively bordered with conventional patterns in red and blue, neatly darned by the women of the tribe. It was evident that something of unusual importance was about to take place. Enquiries elicited the information that a great Toda gathering was convoked at Mumjacamund, the small but celebrated village, and sacred dairy immediately behind Government House Gardens. There the oracles were to be consulted regarding certain matters of vital weight to the overlords of the Nilgiris, such as the selling of buffalo milk, and the

morals of their women. Apparently these last, unlike Cæsar's wife, were not "above suspicion."

After a brief halt at Oakes' garage I followed the road downhill, then turned to right past the square grey market enclosure, where all the world and his wife foregather on Tuesday mornings at the weekly *shandi*. It is even whispered that they are more regular in their attendance there than they are at church. Round to right again, by the railway station, and along the winding bank of the large artificial lake constructed by order of Mr. Sullivan, Collector of Coimbatore, the first European to build a house in Ootacamund in 1822. On one hand the water lay gleaming in the clear September sunshine; on the other, tall eucalyptus trees looked down upon the road, which curved on between firs, silver oak and the gay yellow of mimosa, locally designated wattle. The lake disappeared, to be succeeded by a dhobi drying ground, the low-lying land to left white with sheets and shirts and other articles of wearing apparel usually considered of a private nature. A little more and some semi-ruined *samadhs* marked the site of an old Hindu burning *ghat*. Next, a stream flowed tranquilly between banks densely fringed with arum lilies. Gorse grew in bright yellow patches, and tall bracken put in an appearance.

The road curved upwards to the rolling downs, green and seemingly smooth as velvet, patterned with grey boulders, moss and lichen stained. To right, at a higher level, rose the golf course commanding wonderful views of the encircling amphitheatre of mountains.

Near the fourth milestone from Ooty, a signboard

bore the inscription "Gudalur 26 miles." Far as the eye could see the downs rose and fell like the great green waves of a tempest-lashed sea. The breeze blew freshly from the west, and cows grazed on the short grass.

A sharp pull up at Sandy Nullah toll-gate, where a fee of eight annas is charged. After this the downs are somewhat bare for awhile, and strewn with grey boulders stained a rusty yellow. Buffaloes were munching contentedly in charge of Badagas, the second of the hill tribes peculiar to the Nilgiris. Although not in the least picturesque they are the most useful of the three races. The third are the Kotahs, from whom Kotagiri derives its name. They ply the profession of musicians, and are greatly feared for the magic arts which they practise. Both they and the Badagas acknowledge the Todas as overlords.

A side road branched off to Dunsandle Tea Estate. The highway wound steeply up to command a spacious view of rolling green downs, darkened on the horizon by distant tree-tops which stood out sharply against the blue line of the sky. On through Windy Gap, the scene of the last Point-to-Point races. Thereafter the downs became broken up by sholas. The road ran through a wood scented with flowering trees, in gloomy contrast to which were those grey and ghostly branches shrouded in lichen, or so-called Spanish moss. Out into the sunlight of the downs again, then the road wound on amid trees, bramble and bracken, and a line of green hills stretched along the horizon to the west. Imperceptibly almost, the high ground shifted from right to left. Into the twilight of

another *shola*, the heads of buffaloes thrust out from the fantastical tangle of undergrowth aroused to mild curiosity by the noise of the passing car. A Toda climbed the bank to left with the assured step of the overlord.

To right a signboard pointed towards Glen Morgan Tea Estate, beyond which lie the celebrated Pykara Falls. Near the tenth milestone the main road descends in a series of curves, then uphill again. The Pykara River is sighted. Shortly afterwards it is crossed by a bridge. Here the water is shallow, of a brownish green colour and partially blocked with boulders. To left is the traveller's bungalow, and the Ootacamund-Gudalur bridle-path outlined with a hedge starred with the snowy blossoms of the potato creeper. This charming flower is every whit as dainty and decorative as jasmine, and deserves to be known by a more poetical name than that of the homely vegetable after which it is so unkindly and prosaically called.

Leaving Pykara in the rear, the road climbs steeply up. The downs rise on the left. To right a hedge intervenes between the sloping ground dropping to neat rows of tea bushes. The country is very green and appears the more so by contrast with the red earth. High above, on the left, an extensive eucalyptus *shola* scales the hillside. Near the sixteenth milestone the scarred earth displays a recent clearing, and newly planted tea bushes. Telegraph wires stretch overhead, and the grass, bordering the way, is gay with brightly coloured wild flowers.

Seventeen miles from Ootacamund another eight annas is charged at Mukurchi toll-gate. Here the

road crosses a stream. The spot is lonely and picturesque. It takes its name from a diminutive stone temple romantically set on the bank of a brook, which ripples musically below the highway to left. A bull keeps watch and ward at each of the four corners of the roof. White iris blooms in front of the verandah, and all around grow giant forget-me-nots of true cerulean blue.

On the road winds to the tea estates of Liddesdale and Bellevue. Round a sharp corner a magnificent panorama comes suddenly into sight. Thousands of feet below lies the irregular, hill-sprinkled plain of Mysore veiled by a blue haze, beneath piled-up cloud banks deepening in hue from snow white to smoke grey. The formation of the country seems to suggest that a giant hand caught and crushed it, much as a mere mortal might crumple an unwelcome letter.

At the nineteenth milestone the road starts to run downhill in a quick succession of sharp curves, threading a tortuous course amid the densely growing *shola* and tangled undergrowth. Every now and again small black wooden bridges negotiate streams at awkward angles, but picturesque in the extreme, their banks fringed with tree ferns, forget-me-nots and a profusion of other plants. A sign-board, on the right, points to the Seaforth Plantations. By this time the atmosphere has grown appreciably warmer. A little more and the road emerges from the wood at Naduvattam, a village which boasts a police station and a travellers' bungalow. Lining the road were great boulders, between which the Himalayan daisy thrust its small pink and white flowers. Into the shade of another

shola. Past an old stone tank and then, to right, below the roadway, appeared the grey iron roofs of the Government Quinine Factory. When, in 1860, Sir Clements Markham first introduced the cinchona tree into India from South America, he selected the Nilgiris as the site of his earliest experimental plantation. Results fully demonstrated the wisdom of his choice.

Near here I turned off the petrol. The road wound rapidly downhill, a dizzy precipice to one side or the other, as the *khud* lay to left or right. Triangular caution posts gave timely warning of the most dangerous corners. Far below the country spread out open as a map. Ridge upon ridge of mountains stretched along the horizon, until the last jagged grey line faded away against the sky. Still the road continued its corkscrew descent, threading its tortuous course amid rocks and trees, appearing and vanishing like a looped ribbon of palest red. Meanwhile each twist and turn commanded extensive views of singular grandeur and beauty.

Through a *shola* bordered with the orange and pink flowers of a black-berried bush—the wild lantana. Here a "toot toot" startled the silence. A moment later a small two-seater car came slowly, laboriously into view. Past the twenty-fifth milestone, and into a herd of cows. A diminutive palm mingled with the bushes growing on the hillside. Lower still I sighted clustering pink roses and then a coffee plantation. To left a big white church overlooked the approach to Gudalur. Chickens scattered to left and right at the sound of the motor, and dogs barked loudly as I sped by a white *masjid*.

The road was bad going but extremely picturesque as it ran between tall green bamboo, scarlet hibiscus and great white trumpet lilies. Unfortunately it owed everything to nature and little to art. Evidently considerable time had elapsed since it had been repaired. To left a side track branched off to the Ouchtaloney Valley. Keeping to the right I ran through a village of thatched houses, before one of which stood a large Buick car. The driver informed me that he had just taken an officer down to Bangalore and was returning to Ootacamund. To left a signboard bore the inscription "Nadani, 7 miles." Here I turned on the petrol.

It was very hot and airless, with jungle on either side and great teak trees lining the way. Telegraph wires stretched along to right. At Gudalur toll-gate another eight annas were asked. Many ways met at the signpost, its black letters reading:—"Teppacaddu, 11 miles; Kuchanhalla, 14 miles; Neilaculla, 10 miles; Sultan's Battery, 26 miles."

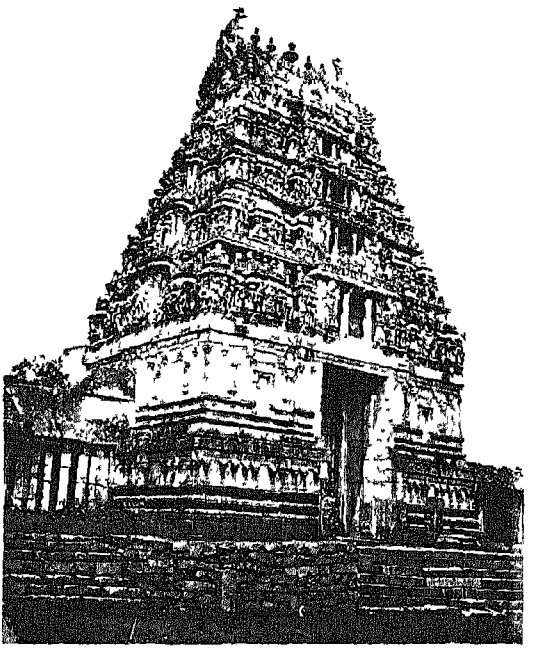
Beyond this the road was stone-strewn and badly in need of a steam roller. Paddy fields lay in a hollow to right. On either side stretched curious red pillars varying in height from four to ten and twelve feet. Tapering, and deeply fluted, they appeared in a ruinate condition as though the columns once marking the triumphal progress of some great Emperor of old—a Chandragupta or an Asoka. As a matter of fact they were the work of the industrious ant. Possibly some such sight inspired King Solomon, when he exclaimed: "Go, study the ant. Consider its ways." In many cases the cobra had appropriated the ants' habitat to himself and dwelt therein. The pillars continued at irregular intervals

all the way to Mysore. I tried to break off a piece of one, from the top of which a small flowering tree had sprung but found it as hard as terra cotta, a substance that it closely resembled.

The road began to ascend in a series of curves. A gap in the trees showed the Nilgiri mountains drawing a high barrier across the confines of Mysore, their green outline broken by a fine silver thread as the white waters of Pykara Falls dashed down towards the plain. Thereafter the road lost itself in the all-enveloping jungle. The view was confined to trees and to the long red road, the sun beating down upon it. To left a signboard pointed through the forest to Mudumalai, six miles distant. A flock of kites rose suddenly from a thicket, as though startled at an unlawful feast, and flew heavily away.

The car crossed an iron bridge spanning a sluggish river of opaque whitish green water. A couple of long-tailed monkeys scampered up a tree with much excited chatter, and the mysterious recesses of the jungle echoed the twittering of innumerable birds. The road was persistently bad, with frequent stretches of uncrushed stones. Past a herd of very thin cows, and through a village of thatched houses. To left a signboard pointed towards Kedagulli Camp, one mile distant. Every now and again picturesque glimpses of the river were caught through openings in the branches to right. By this time the colour of the soil had faded from bright to dull heliotrope.

Still winding, the road continued on through the jungle, frequently bordered by very fine bamboo. Two toll-gates in rapid succession. One demanded



TEMPLE ON CHAMANDI HILL, MYSORE

eight annas, and the other a rupee. At Teppacaddu, a thatched village forty-two miles from Ooty and fifty-six from Mysore City, I halted for breakfast. In the absence of a travellers' bungalow I was invited to occupy the small stone verandah of a little empty *godown*, the front of which bore the rather formidable legend "Plague Passport Bungalow." Soon a few beggars collected, and I had the satisfaction of sharing my repast with the halt, the maimed and the blind. Near by a faint cloud of blue grey smoke hovered above a party of three wayfarers intent upon preparing their midday meal. For a moment I almost envied them. Would that it were possible to retain the semblance of civilization and yet travel as free from life's burdens as a *fakir !*

Teppacaddu likewise possesses a toll-gate where the fee charged is eight annas. Near by a signpost points along a grass-grown track to Musnagudi, four miles distant, and to Benne, fourteen miles further on in the same direction. To right a rocky road crosses the Moyar River by a wooden bridge characterized by an old stone approach.

On again at 2 p.m. The afternoon was hot and drowsy. Silence reigned in the jungle but for the monkeys, grey fellows with cunning yellow-brown eyes. These kept up an incessant chatter as they swung from branch to branch, or scrambled higher into the trees at the sound of the car. Generally speaking the road was bad. It was mostly uphill. At times the gradient was quite steep. Milestones were conspicuous by their absence. The character of the jungle began to change. An occasional banyan tree was sighted. At intervals three successive signposts, on the left, pointed towards Mudumalai,

with a monotonous persistency that recalled the famous saying: "All roads lead to Rome."

Downhill, past a board inscribed Kakan Halla, and over a stone bridge spanning the almost dry bed of a river lined with great slabs of smooth rock. Here the main road entered Bandipur State Forest. Up a stiff hill to a triangular caution mark. To right a tamarind tree appeared in the jungle like the face of an old friend unexpectedly seen in a crowd. A flock of sheep panic-stricken, followed the leader in a wild scamper across the road directly in front of the car. They were leisurely followed by a shepherd armed with a length of rope, a prosaic substitute for the crook familiar to all admirers of "Little Bo Peep." A little more, and the trees fell back from the highway retreating to the confines of the wood. Deprived of shade, the hot dusty road gleamed, white and dazzling, in the full glare of the afternoon sun as it zig-zagged upwards to another triangular caution mark. This heralded a sharp turn to the left. Almost immediately a large black board came into sight raised on a stone platform. On it, in letters of gold, was written:

"His Highness' Sri Chama Raja Wodeyars' Camp, 1894."

The tablet is in the nature of a memorial, the Raja having died in that year. Historically he is an interesting figure in that he was the first prince of the old ruling dynasty of Mysore, dispossessed by Tippu Sultan in the eighteenth century, to occupy the Gaddi after the rendition of 1881. For fifty-one years prior to that the State was under British administration.

Downhill to the toll-gate at Bandipura. Here a rupee is charged. Rather a high price considering the neglected condition of the road. A yellow building, to right, is the travellers' bungalow. The jungle deteriorates into a tangle of insignificant trees. The thoroughfare zig-zags downward in a succession of sharp curves, the most acute signalled by triangular white posts. Into the welcome shade of Kaniyapur State Forest. Past Somanathyam Sandal Reserve and two small stone buildings, on the left, one evidently a shrine. Level ground at last. I had reached the plains.

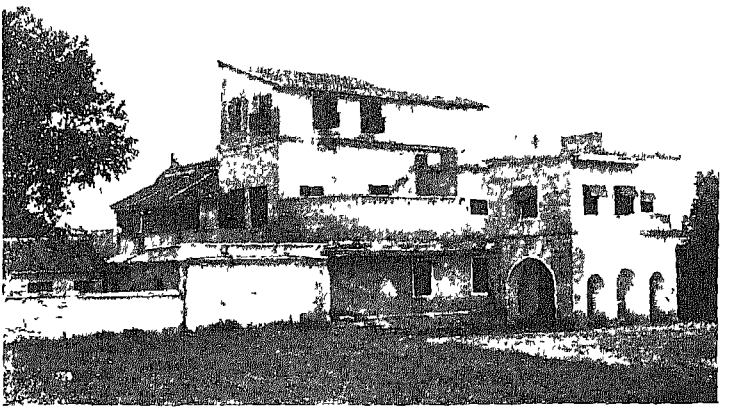
Soon banyan and tamarind trees lined the way, occasionally meeting overhead to form a noble avenue. The earth was flat, red and covered with scrub. Behind, the mountains lay in a semi-circle, fast disappearing in a bank of blue mist. As I neared Hangala, a village of red-tiled houses, the country was featureless and uninteresting. Two men, a boy and some buffaloes were leisurely ploughing. Their primitive wooden implements differed in no whit from those used by their earliest forebears upon the virgin soil, when the world was young.

In addition to the many trees, the road was lined with aloes and occasional cactus. A palm *tope* lay to right and a rush-fringed *jhil* to left. Over the Gundal River, and through the vivid green of paddy fields to the big, bare village of Gundlapet, with its modern travellers' bungalow and its relics of a stormy past. To right, some twenty paces from the thoroughfare, the eye was caught by a square-walled enclosure, gateless and dominated by a curious yellow and white pyramid. Flat on the ground

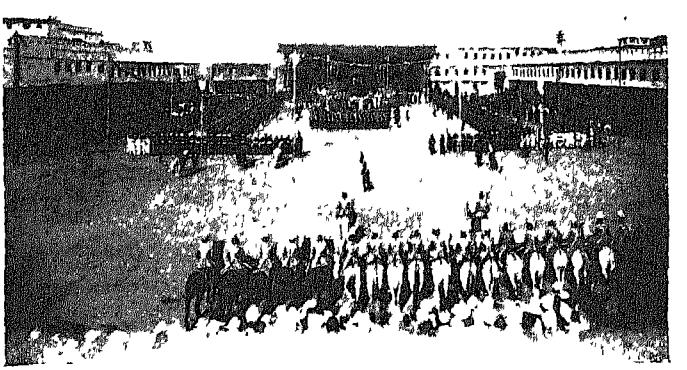
stretched three tombstones. On one a coffin was carved, and on another a cross. The inscriptions were obliterated. The third, a granite slab, was legible and bore the names of John Burford and his wife, and the date 1859. Beyond rose the extensive remains of a great mud wall, once the outer rampart of a fortress, one of the many which played so stirring a part in the old wars between Hindu and Muhammadan, and which were dismantled by the British early in the nineteenth century, after the defeat of Tippu Sultan, and his dramatic death at Seringapatam.

By this time the sky had become overcast. Ominous black clouds warned that a storm was imminent. A steam-roller lay in state at one side of the road, under an orange-hued *shamiana*. Evidently it was intended for ornament rather than use. A string of country carts lumbered past, their big wheels—one solid round of wood—creaking and groaning over the stones. By a round tank and then, before the disaster could be averted, the car had run over the dark form of a sleeping cobra lying coiled up in the middle of the highway. Apparently it was not much the worse for its crushing experience. Raising itself it expanded its hood and hissed, a display of ill-temper easily excused under the circumstances. Soon after a signpost on the left pointed towards Rachnapura. Just here the storm burst in a torrent of rain to the spectacular accompaniment of thunder and lightning.

To west, the horizon was bounded by the Himalavatiswami Mountains; to right by the horizon. Another large palm tope was traversed, and then the village of Pegur, where a signpost pointed to Hunsur,



WELLINGTON LODGE, MYSORE — FORMERLY THE RESIDENCE OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON



From a print in the Mahārāja's Museum, Mysore

DURBAR DURBAR AT THE OLD PALACE, MYSORE

forty-five miles distant. The shower, although heavy, was local. It was curious to look through the rain and see the sun shining on the hills to west. Suddenly, with a report like that of a pistol, a tyre punctured close to a tall milestone displaying the figure 108. In the absence of other information I surmised that this was the distance from Bangalore. The ground was literally swarming with big black ants. Monkeys kept up a shrill chatter in the adjacent trees. Speedily a crowd collected, recruited from the shepherds and shepherdesses of the surrounding flocks and herds. Conspicuous among them was the picturesque figure of a tall handsome youth. On his head he wore a grey and white check duster knotted on the nape of the neck in the approved fashion of a pirate of comic opera. For the rest, his costume consisted of khaki shorts and a bright blue coat. He carried a satchel over his right shoulder and that impressive emblem of respectability, a large black cotton umbrella, hooked on to his left arm. With modest pride in his lofty mission he informed me that he was agent for Singer's sewing machines.

By the time I was ready to start again the rain had ceased. The landscape presented little variety, and no features of particular interest until, near the hundred-and-second milestone, a green opening in the trees framed a distant view of a Dravidian temple, its tall gilt *gopuram* glittering in the sunshine. Over the Hullahally Channel and across the railway line at Nanjangud. Here the station, camping ground and travellers' bungalow, a yellow building with a red-tiled roof, came suddenly into sight. For a while the high road ran parallel with

the railway, then it traversed a long bridge across the Kabhani, so shallow that buffaloes were grazing on grassy mud flats in the river bed. Some old Hindu shrines stood on the bank, dilapidated but picturesque. How much they owed to the mellowing influence of time was made strikingly evident by the close proximity of a modern Hindu temple which, in its gaudy coat of many colours, seemed a vulgar parvenu by contrast.

Paddy fields lay to right and left, spreading a carpet of bright living green around a large Dravidian temple, conspicuous for towering *gopurams* above its gates, and a tall *dipmal* for festival lights. Over Prampur Channel, swollen by the recent downpour, and through the village of Chikkanrajdu. The road was full of holes which the late shower had converted into red pools. Through these the car splashed; then over the railway line to where the road split into a fork, whence it ran to Kodakala village on the left, and Mysore city on the right. A stone bridge spanned the Yannehoe. Away to the north a solitary mountain showed sapphire blue against the fading sky, crowned by the spire of a Hindu shrine, the famous temple of Chamundi, the four-mouthed goddess, tutelary deity of the reigning house of Mysore. A thousand stone steps, built by a pious cloth merchant named Manajirao, lead to the summit. Midway the flight passes an immense monolithic figure of Nandi, the bull sacred to Siva, carved out of one of the great boulders wherewith the eminence is strewn. Probably it is the largest of its kind in India.

The curious pile, on which Chamundi is perched, is one of those *droogs*—so called from the Sanskrit

"durga," a hill fort—isolated masses of rock which played so important a part in the Deccan and Carnatic wars. The boulders covering these natural strongholds proved formidable weapons when rolled down upon an attacking party.

After a brief interlude the rain came on again with renewed vigour, blurring the view. Near the ninetieth milestone the road divided, branching to Mysore on the right. A few crosses, enclosed by a stone wall, marked the site of an old Christian burial ground. Some abandoned Hindu shrines, with elaborate roofs, served as cattle sheds on the left. Stone tanks in plenty were seen, it being on record that, formerly, the State possessed thirty-six thousand of these. Past Sree Chandumbra Lucerne Farm, and a large public garden, gay with flowers and dotted with pavilions, the roofs of which were profusely decorated with Hindu deities in stucco. Next to it lay the unbroken green of a palm tope, silent, secretive and mysterious. To right appeared a great tank of numerous steps, and some small, tree-embowered temples. The walls of the ancient fort overlooked the water. Two mighty gaps showed in the masonry, where roads had been cut. Above the grey pile glittered the gilt dome and golden trident of the Maharaja's Palace. Near by was the bazaar, even more famous than Hoshiarpur, in the Punjab, for the beauty and finish of its sandalwood work, and its inlaying with ivory and mother-of-pearl. The art is a time-honoured one in the district. As far back as the sixth century A.D. the wood carvers of Mysore were celebrated for their skill under the Chalukyas. Later on, when they abandoned the Jain faith and adopted Hinduism,

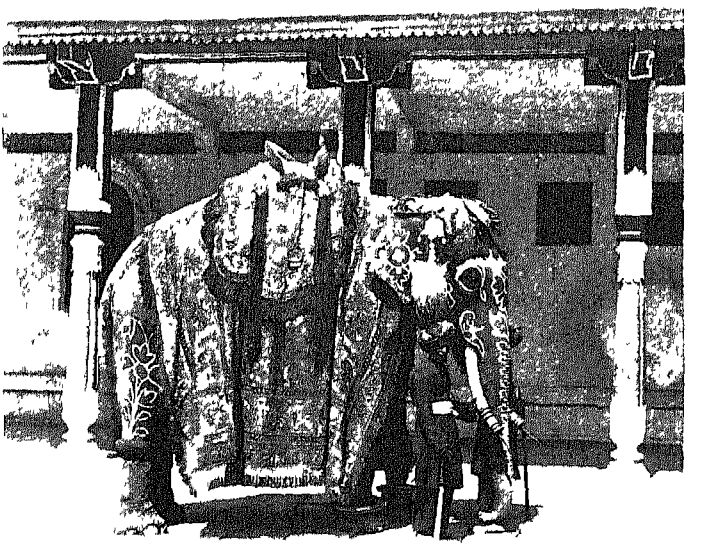
their style is claimed to have somewhat deteriorated, but not their technique.

On through Hardinge Circle, aglow with brightly-coloured flowers, past the arched yellow gateway of Government House, then to the left, and finally into the compound of the Empire Hotel.

Second Day

It was a still grey morning. As yet the dazzling sun had not taken possession of Chamundi. A transparent veil of filmy mist rested softly upon the sacred mount, where by night long lines of electric light had cut a path through the darkness. The shining trail followed the winding flight of a thousand steps, making it seem as though a stairway of stars led to the shrine of the goddess. With a farewell glance at the mystical Droog I emerged from the hotel compound at 7.45 a.m. Turning to the left, and then to the right, I ran past the public library, proceeding slowly down Railway-Station road in the wake of a large elephant. A momentary halt to enquire the way of a khaki-clad policeman, his blue *puggari* fringed with yellow. He responded by pointing to the left, in a northerly direction. Behind, to south, glittered the gilt cupola of the Maharaja's Palace encircled by the massive walls of the old fort, walls which had echoed the dying sighs of many a British officer captured by Haider Ali or Tippu Sultan.

At that matutinal hour the bazaar presented an animated appearance. People walked in the middle of the thoroughfare for preference, exhibiting a



Photograph by H. H. the Maharaja of Mysore [illegible]

THE SACRED ELEPHANT ARRAYED FOR THE DURBAR

characteristic indifference towards wheeled traffic. Out into a wide street, and between two low octagonal towers topped by domed kiosks, evidently once a gateway, for at either side stretched fragments of the city wall. Near by stood a stone post inscribed "Bangalore 86 miles." Here the deeply-rutted road entered an avenue of banyans, the trunk of each great tree ringed round with red to a height of about three feet. Brick-kilns lay to the left. The flat country was sparsely dotted with cactus, aloes and low bush, varied by an occasional palm tope. A *dhobi ghat* came into sight on the right. To left the stream was overlooked by a Dravidian temple, its towering *gopuram* crowded with divinities moulded in buff-coloured stucco, and its spire of glittering gold.

A little further on, a small bridge spanned the de Varroy channel. Then followed the brilliant green of rice fields. Far off, to north-east, mountains bounded the plain. Through the little village of Kalaslaviedi, and across the wide Virajanady canal, men and bullocks were wading knee deep in muddy water as they ploughed the paddy fields. Women bent over the young crops weeding, while in the neighbouring plots, harvesters were reaping.

The city boundary was passed six miles from Mysore. Close to the eighty-first milestone the road again traversed the Virajanady canal, whereafter it ran through a palm tope. More rice fields, grey hedges of aloes, an old white *masjid* and a Muhammadan graveyard succeeded one another in rapid succession. So on to the big village of Panchimavahani with its relics of Hindu and Moslem greatness as perpetuated by temple and mosque.

dilapidated but none the less picturesque, with their romantic appeal to those was hold the poet's view :

"The past doth win a glory from its being far."

At the further end of the village a long stone bridge spans the Cauvery, the sacred river of Southern India, known to the devout as *Dakshina Ganga.* The Puranas credit it with a divine origin, hence the whole of its course is hallowed ground, from its rise on Brahmagiri mountain, in Coorg, to its final mingling with the sea in the Bay of Bengal. Hindu Holy Writ records of it that a daughter of Brahma once dwelt on earth with a mortal father to procure beatitude for whom she transformed herself into the river Cauvery, the waters of which cleanse all who bathe therein of sin. Even the wonder-working Ganges proceeds once annually on a subterranean pilgrimage to the lofty source of the Cauvery in the Western Ghats, whence she returns purged and purified.

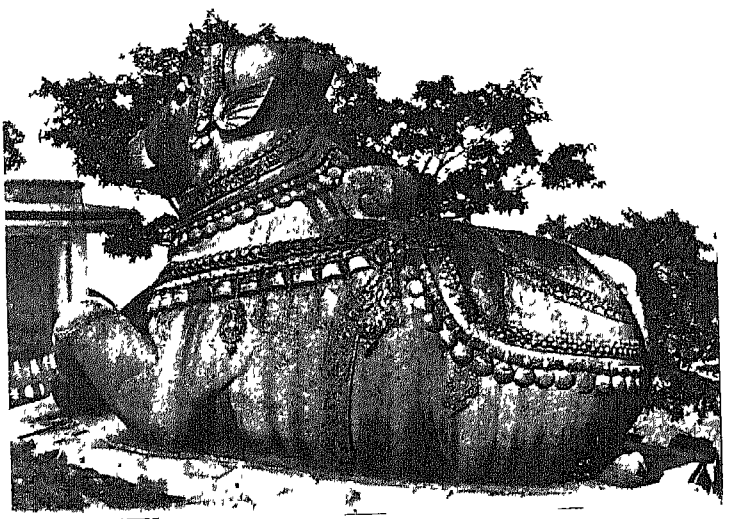
The bridge connects with the sacred island of Seringapatam, a narrow oval piece of ground some three miles in extent and one in width, encircled by two branches of the river. Restricted though the space is, it has played an important part in history. Legend claims that, in the dim past, Gautama Rishi dwelt thereon in a cave, worshipping the god Raganatha, whose temple is now the largest and most important building in the fort. It dates from A.D. 894, when it was founded by an adherent of the Ganga dynasty, who likewise erected the neighbouring shrine of Turemala, protecting both with an encircling wall from the encroachments of the sur-

rounding jungle. This accomplished, he named the place Srirangapattana. Early in the twelfth century the Hoysala king bestowed it upon the reformer Ramanuja, together with a considerable tract bordering upon the Cauvery. Ramanuja promptly set about forming the Aslagrama, or Eight Townships, to each of which he appointed his personal representative, either a Prabhu or a Hebbar. In 1454 a descendant of the original nominee obtained permission from the Vijanayagar sovereign to erect a fort on the island. At the same time he received the title of Danayak together with the governorship of the district. A little later on, the Vijanayagar monarch appointed his own viceroy, who was known as the Sri Ranga Rayal. In 1610 the stronghold was captured by the Maharaja of Mysore, who transferred his capital thither. From then on Seringapatam suffered many sieges. The Marathas alone attacked it four times, namely, in 1732, in 1755, in 1759 and in 1771. The Muhammadan usurper, Haider Ali, took over the island in 1761. Upon his death he was succeeded by his son, the notorious Tippu Sultan, under whom it was first besieged by the British in 1792. Hostilities concluded with the famous treaty enforced by Lord Cornwallis, which left Tippu Sultan burning for revenge. Finally it was again invested in April 1799 by the combined forces of the Honourable East India Company and the Nizam of Hyderabad. The fort held out for a month but was ultimately carried on May 4th. Tippu Sultan fell while attempting to repel the invaders.

After traversing the bridge, a stone tablet on the right bears the inscription " Skelly's Post, 1799."

Major Skelly led the Scottish Brigade at the storming of Seringapatam. Shortly afterwards the road again crosses the river. A signboard to left reads: "Cauvery South Branch." The scenery is pretty and very green. Yet another signpost to right points northwards to the fort, southwards to the Garrison cemetery, and eastwards in the direction of Bangalore. A stone's throw further on, a third signpost points south to Scott's Bungalow, of tragical associations, and a mystery which the years have failed to elucidate.

The fort is seen on the left within a furlong of the highway. Its massive brown ramparts, now the playground of innumerable monkeys, enclose the old capital of Mysore, entered from this side by two imposing gateways. Turning off to the right a short drive brought me to the traveller's bungalow, a white-washed building, with a sloping red-tiled roof and deep verandahs. In front a low wall encloses an octagonal space containing a broken pedestal, which I was informed was not intended as a monument but as a decoration. Near by were two finely carved stone statues, one of which depicted Ganapati, the elephant-headed god of wisdom. The *matey* was absent at the bazaar. Through an open window I saw a man shaving. Monkeys were disporting themselves amid the neighbouring trees, crows, ravens, and some goats lending a further touch of animation to the picture. Ultimately the *matey* materialized, a skeleton-like figure in a dirty shirt and shabby skull-cap. Yes, there were two rooms and two beds. I could have a room but both beds were occupied. A glance sufficed to convince me that this last was not a



Presented by H H the Maharajah of Mysore

STONE BULL ON CHAMUNDI HILL, MYSORE

matter for regret. Provisions? At this he looked perturbed. Tea might be managed, likewise sugar, but milk no. With a gesture he indicated the goats. They had all been milked at sunrise. Bread? Biscuits? He shook his head. Rice he could get, and mutton. He could make a good curry, provided always that the essential advance were forthcoming. He was a poor man. Seven rupees a month was his pay, and few travellers came. Now he had three all at once and only two beds. Truly *un embarras de richesse.* A rupee sent him on his way rejoicing. A moment later I was joined by the man whom I had seen shaving. He had spent a week in Seringapatam, attracted thither by reading Meadows Taylor's "Tippu Sultan." Very kindly he volunteered to show me over the fort. With the aid of a car he assured me that all the essential points could be visited in a couple of hours.

A straight road runs from the traveller's bungalow to one of the two main entrances, a large gate near the south-west corner of the rampart. The motor covered the intervening space in about five minutes, a desolate waste of ground which, prior to the siege under Lord Cornwallis in 1792, was entirely built over with houses. This flourishing suburb extended to the Lal Bhag, or Garden of Rubies, containing Haider Ali's tomb, but was demolished by Tippu Sultan in order that he might erect batteries against future attacks.

At this point the approach to the fort is guarded by three lines of masonry defences. The outermost has been almost entirely destroyed. What remains reveals a somewhat complicated series of cells with arched openings. The road traverses the breach,

then crosses a wide and deep moat, now overgrown with aloes, cactus, miscellaneous undergrowth and a few insignificant trees. Beyond, stands the massive gateway faced with Mysore granite, traces of carving showing above the arch. The adjoining battlements are of considerable thickness and are composed of mud overlaid with thin bricks and cut stone blocks. Guard-rooms line the tunnel-like interior of the gate. An inner portal penetrates the third wall. The wooden doors have gone. Their absence is accounted for in old records of the capture of Seringapatam in sinister fashion. The fighting was particularly severe about the gates, where the dead and wounded lay in piled up heaps. At last their muslin clothes caught on fire from the paper of the British cartridges, and blazed away fiercely until bodies and iron-studded doors disappeared in one general holocaust.

Inside, to right, rises Tippu Sultan's mosque, dome-crowned, and glittering with spiral gilt ornaments, its tall minarets pierced by graceful lines of pigeon holes from base to summit. A low entrance admits to the confined courtyard surrounded by rooms for priests, attendants and pilgrims, the ground occupied by stone tombs intermingled with the speckled green and yellow of crotons. A large tank lies in the right-hand corner. Eighteen steep stone steps lead up to the high terrace supporting the sanctuary. Three rows of decorative arches divide the interior of the *liwan*, which is further characterized by a deep-pillared verandah, five arched doorways and a matted floor. A corkscrew staircase ascends the minaret at either side of the façade. The wooden steps narrow until it is only

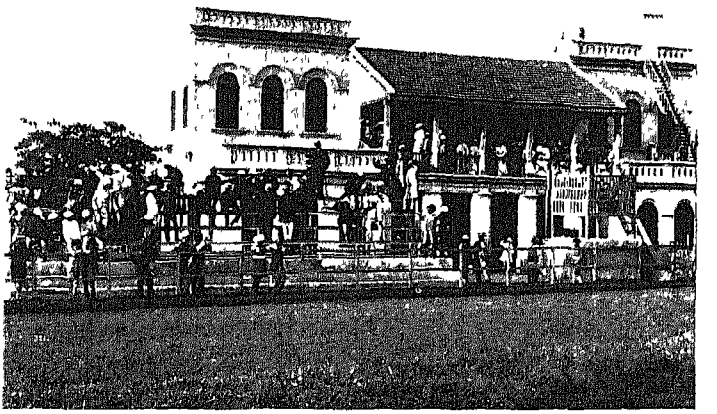
possible to squeeze up sideways, a crab-like procedure amply repaid by the view from the summit.

Back to the car and along a straight road to the north-eastern angle of the inner fortifications. A narrow footpath leads through a gap in the masonry to right, and then down to the wide moat, here crossed by a causeway, which encircles the second wall. It would be difficult to picture a more romantic spot than this secluded corner overlooked, on all four sides, by the ruins of once formidable battlements, now peacefully invaded by tall slender palms, flowering weed and bush. A low archway, half hidden by tangled undergrowth, frames the black aperture of a dungeon. Near by blue-clad women in red *saris* bent over the green water of the moat washing clothes, cleaning vessels and filling shining brass *lotahs*, golden bright as the sunshine flashed and gleamed upon them. Beyond the outer wall flowed the rock-strewn Cauvery.

Through a postern, on the arch of which was a tablet engraved with the words: "The dungeon discovered in 1859 by Thomas Inman, Esq., M.I.C.E. Executive Engineer." Across a dry moat to a black opening, which can hardly be dignified with the name of a doorway. From it stole a breath of air so damp and chill that each match struck emitted a faint blue flame and instantly went out. The flash, however, revealed a flight of stone steps, steep and narrow as a ladder, winding down to secret dungeons of the terrible kind known in French by the grimly expressive term of "Oubliettes." Here British prisoners of war were thrust to dwell in perpetual darkness until disease, poison, or the swift deft touch of the strangler set them free. Beyond

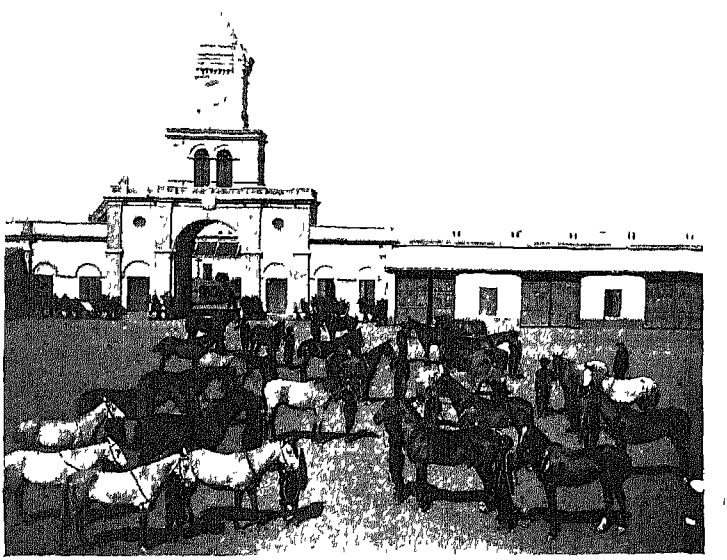
again, to left, some twenty or more stairs descended to eleven arched cells sunk in the massive foundation of the battlements. Here more British captives were chained to stone wall brackets. Their lot was enviable by comparison. They, at least, had twilight, for between their dungeon and the second line of ramparts was a space of a foot, through which the kindly sunshine filtered, and, perchance, on nights of unusual splendour, the silver rays of the moon. Retracing our steps we drove round to the Water Gate. To right, above the low arched entrance, a grey marble tablet catches the eye. On it, in letters of gold, is the inscription: "At the northern end of this archway fell Tippu Sultan, May 4th, 1799."

After the lapse of more than a century it is difficult to realize the full significance of what, at the time, was regarded as an epoch-making event of great national importance. In his day Tippu Sultan was a power to be reckoned with, an absolute monarch bent upon limiting, if he could not actually destroy, the growing influence of the East India Company. Nor was this the only menace which he threatened. He was actively allied with our bitter enemy, the newly-created French Republic. The garrison of Seringapatam included over three hundred Frenchmen. These not only drilled the army in European tactics and discipline, they directed the manufacture of the latest European weapons of war in the arsenal. Small wonder, in those days of jealous rivalry, if Englishmen regarded the death of Tippu Sultan as of auspicious augury and worthy to be recorded in letters of gold. His end was dramatic. For a month the Company's Bombay and Madras armies,



Presented by H H the Maharaja of Mysore

GRAND STAND, MYSORE RACE COURSE



Presented by H H the Maharajah of Mysore

HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJAH'S STABLES, MYSORE

supported by the allied forces of Hyderabad, had closely invested Seringapatam. On May 1st a breach was effected in the outer curtain of the rampart, and widened on the two following days. This fact, coupled with an alarming shortage of supplies, decided General Harris to launch the grand attack. The storming party, directed by General Baird, amounted to four thousand three hundred and seventy-six all told. Of this number, two thousand four hundred and ninety-four were Europeans, and the remainder Indians. The force was composed of ten flank companies of Europeans, followed by the 12th, 33rd, 73rd, and 76th Regiments, three corps of grenadier sepoys representing the three presidencies, two hundred of the Nizam's troops, and a hundred artillery and pioneers. These were supported in the trenches by battalion companies of the Swiss regiment de Meuron, commanded by Lieut.-Colonel Wellesley, afterwards the celebrated Duke of Wellington, who was also in charge of the Nizam's contingent, and four battalions of Madras sepoys.

The Bombay troops participating in the attack crossed the Cauvery at sunset, on May 3rd, and joined the main body. Under cover of darkness the storming party concealed themselves near the batteries and in the crowded trenches. At 11 o'clock on the following morning word was received that the attack was timed for 1 p.m. The hottest hour of the day was selected the better to effect a surprise. It was further arranged to attack at two points simultaneously, to north and south of the breach.

Lieutenant Lalor of the 73rd Regiment volunteered to guide the troops across the Cauvery. A

forlorn hope of twelve men, under Sergeant Graham, and an officer's party of thirty men turned out ready to precede the two divisions. Satisfied that all was in readiness General Baird gave the signal by drawing his sword. Instantly the forlorn hope dashed ahead with trailed arms. In six minutes they had forded the Cauvery, crossed the glacis and outer ditch, and reached the top of the breach. The enemy retaliated with a heavy fire of grape and musketry, doing deadly execution upon the army floundering amid the rocks, holes and slippery shallows of the wide river bed. Suddenly Sergeant Graham was seen planting the British Colours on the wall, an act that entitled him to rank as a British officer from that moment. A mighty shout went up from the advancing ranks. He responded by grasping the colour staff, waving his cap and crying, "Hurrah for Lieutenant Graham!" Even as he spoke he fell forward shot through the heart.

The left attack upon the northern ramparts was met by Tippu Sultan in person. Eye-witnesses record how he shot down a number of the enemy with his own hand. Gradually he was forced back to the traverses, his troops falling thickly about him. Before retreating across the second ditch he complained of a pain in one of his legs, from an old wound, and mounted his horse. His intention was to reach the inner fort through the Water Gate. Before he could enter and shut the door he was hit in the right side by a musket ball. Under the arch he was again shot, his horse dropping dead and his turban falling off. Seeing him badly wounded his servants lifted him into a palanquin. Here he lay breathing painfully until a European soldier,

attracted by the glitter of his richly jewelled belt, made a snatch for it. The action roused Tippu Sultan. Gathering up his remaining strength he lunged at the man with the sword which he still grasped. The soldier raised his musket to his shoulder and shot the dying potentate through the temple. Death was instantaneous. Late in the evening, when the fact became known, search was made for his remains by torch light. His body was disentangled from some three hundred slain. Among the number were the corpses of several richly dressed women, evidently ladies of the harem, who had followed their master's fortunes to the end. His jewels, of considerable value, were missing and were never traced.

By a little after 2 p.m. the ramparts and cavaliers had been carried. The British colours flew from many points. Early in the attack some privates belonging to the 73rd Regiment had seen their colours shot down, whereupon they had fought their way to the spot and replaced them with an infantry jacket.

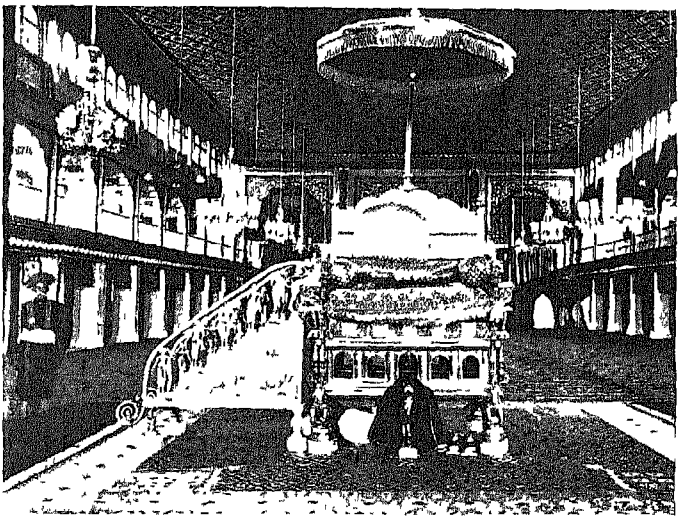
We passed along the dark tunnel-like passage of the Water Gate, and out through the iron-studded wooden door which, had Tippu Sultan succeeded in closing on that fateful May afternoon, might have caused British history in India to have been written differently. Beyond lies a pleasant quadrangle, grass-grown and shaded with ancient *pipals*, that probably witnessed Tippu Sultan die. No less than a hundred and forty-five stone tablets bearing carved representations of cobras, cluster about the foot of one of the largest, testifying to the survival of tree and serpent worship. Over the last moat,

a placid stretch of green water, then to left along the broad river bank, tree-planted and strewn with elaborately carved débris of gods and animals, evidently the spoils of Hindu temples. Farther on, small stone shrines gaze down upon the rocky bed of the sacred river. Their inner walls are smoke-begrimed from the many meals cooked therein by *sadhus*, *gurus* and other itinerant mystics, for whom they provide a temporary lodging. Many of the trees serve as props to more cobra tablets.

The *ghat* steps presented an animated appearance. Men were bathing, women were washing clothes, scouring cooking utensils and filling drinking vessels, with a splendid disregard for even the most elementary principles of hygiene. Inspired by the sight, my companion volunteered the information that, in a few years, the population of Seringapatam had fallen from twenty thousand to less than a third of that number.

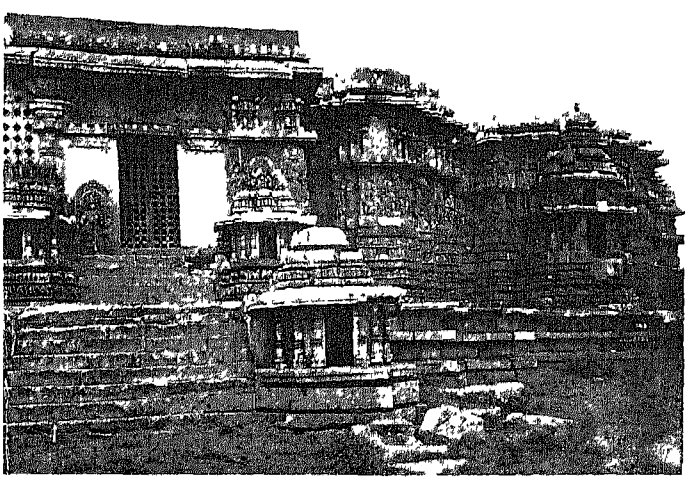
Up a flight of wide steps and over a comparatively modern stone bridge spanning the outer moat. Straight on in the car to right, and then a confused mass of masonry ruins surmounted by an inscribed wall tablet: "Near this spot stood the palace of Tippu Sultan." My companion informed me that this was the actual site of the palace, and that a portion of it, according to local tradition, extended over what is now a grassy *maidan* separated from the ruins by a road.

No sooner had the British occupied the Fort than Major Shee proceeded to the palace accompanied by part of the 33rd Regiment. At the principal gate they found a six-pounder trained upon the road. This they promptly reversed so



Presented by H H the Maharajah of Mysore

HIS HIGHNESS'S THRONE



Presented by H H the Maharajah of Mysore

SOMANATHPUR TEMPLE (ONE OF THE OLD CHALUKYAN TEMPLES FAMOUS FOR THEIR STONE CARVING)

as to point directly towards the palace. Shortly afterwards General Baird arrived and the palace surrendered to him. A rather singular irony of fate is that he had languished for years in a gloomy dungeon near by, having been made prisoner by Haider Ali in 1780. Together with other survivors of Colonel Baillie's ill-fated detachment, most of whom were seriously wounded, he had been marched to Seringapatam and there detained in heavy fetters. The peace of 1794 brought release to him, but more than half his comrades in misfortune had succumbed.

Most of Tippu Sultan's family were found in the palace, including his sons, mostly lads under fifteen. The harem contained six hundred and fifty women, amid them Haider Ali's widows. A number of live tigers were captured in the court-yards. These had taken part in the pompous processions of elephants and horses which daily paraded in front of Tippu Sultan. On such occasions each tiger wore a trailing mantle of green and gold and an embroidered cap, which could be pulled over the eyes if the animal showed signs of mischief. The tiger emblem, which Tippu Sultan had adopted as his crest, appeared on all his personal possessions in the palace and fort, and even adorned his pieces of ordnance. His apartments and furniture were upholstered with the tiger stripe, and his guards, known as "Tippu's Tigers," wore purple *banians* transversely striped, or speckled with irregular white cheetah spots, scarlet kummerbands and red turbans to match.

The palace yielded a surprising amount of loot, mostly treasures stolen from the old royal family of Mysore. With the exception of the harem, and

darbar halls, every corridor, verandah and room was a warehouse crowded with bales and strong boxes each methodically labelled, and bearing either the seal of Haider Ali or of his son Tippu Sultan. The jewels and gold plate, both solid and in filigree, were packed in coffers and kept in dark rooms barred with iron. An entire arcade was devoted to silver-plate and ornaments, including two silver howdahs. Masses were discovered of beautifully decorated weapons studded with jewels, and a large and valuable library containing several thousand splendidly illumined manuscripts. The bales of shawls, fine muslins and embroideries amounted to five hundred camel loads. Amid the many and curious musical instruments was a barrel organ in the shape of a life-size tiger, in which Tippu Sultan is said to have taken great delight.

The most valuable and beautiful thing in the palace was the throne. This was of hard black wood entirely covered with thick sheets of pure gold. It was raised four feet from the ground and rested upon the back of a golden tiger. For steps it had a heavily gilt silver ladder. The canopy was overlaid with gold and encircled by a deep fringe of alternate gold beads and real pearls. Surmounting it was a jewelled peacock with outspread tail of many-coloured gems, a large emerald hanging from the beak which was carved out of an emerald.

Tippu Sultan slept in a small chamber immediately behind his gorgeous throne. His bed was of hard wood and silver, suspended from the ceiling by four chains. The chief darbar hall, in which the throne stood, was an arcaded and pillared apartment coloured green and red in the familiar tiger stripe.

This style of decoration prevailed throughout the palace, which is described, by eye-witnesses, as of a light and fantastical type of architecture suggestive of a European theatre.

Leaving the confused ruin, once the splendid repository of so much treasure, the car ran straight on past the big Dravidian temple of Sri Ramaswamy, patron deity of the island, and along the road under the ramparts to a marble wall tablet inscribed: "In this dungeon were confined for many years the British officers taken by Tippu Sultan." The scene of their long captivity is reached by descending a flight of steep narrow steps, which leads to a series of arcaded cells sunk in the second line of ramparts. Curious effect was lent by a shaft of sunlight pouring through a hole in the masonry overhead, illumining a cannon ball deeply sunk in the ground. On across the railway line, which traverses the fort, to the low archway of the Delhi Gate leading to the so-called Delhi Bridge over the Cauvery, a causeway of stepping stones said to have been constructed in a single night by command of Tippu Sultan. Near by, the north-west corner of the inner rampart is dominated by a pointed obelisk erected in 1907 by the Mysore Government to commemorate the siege and capture of Seringapatam, by the British, under General Harris in 1799. The inscription gives five hundred and ninety as the total of casualties among the Indian troops, those of the British amounting to eight hundred and seventy-four.

We strolled along the top of the broad battlements overlooking the river, rejoining the car near the powder magazine, a solidly-constructed building, with pyramid-shaped roofs and dark cellars, neces-

sitating a lantern; then past a square walled enclosure, once the site of the British hospital, now completely demolished. A little further on, to right, stands the Munsif's Court, always plentifully attended by crowds of litigants, it being the one flourishing institution in the Seringapatam of to-day. On the same side, at a distance of some fifty yards or so from the road, stretches a curious rainbow arch built of bricks, known as de Haviland's Bridge. It lacks a parapet and is a yard wide, the narrow granite keystone being only an inch broader at the top than at the bottom. Local tradition asserts that Major de Haviland erected it to please Tippu Sultan who, far from being satisfied with the result, pronounced it an inspiration of the devil. Beyond again, a postern opens on to the river.

Through the narrow street of the crowded bazaar, where I bought up the entire available stock of soda water, in all half a dozen bottles. Then out by the great gate through which I had entered. By this time it was too hot for further sight-seeing. At four o'clock in the afternoon I motored to the Dary-a-Daulat or "River of Wealth," Tippu Sultan's summer palace, situated a short distance to south of the traveller's bungalow. Surrounding it are delightful gardens of straight walks, avenues of cypress and palm, stone water-channels and fountains, the whole brilliantly illuminated by the flaming blossoms of the petodia tree.

The palace is a low square building raised on a red terrace, and surrounded by deep verandahs supported by red and yellow pillars. The outer walls are covered with brilliantly coloured paintings of much historical interest. Among them Tippu



Presented by H H the Maharajah of Mysore

THE WATERGATE, SERINGAPATAM FORT, WHERE TIPPOO SULTAN WAS KILLED

Sultan is portrayed on horseback, rose in hand, attended by an umbrella bearer and runners holding aloft long feather switches. His escort includes French soldiers quaintly uniformed in tall black shakos, an aigrette erect in front, cut-away scarlet coats with yellow epaulettes and throttle collars of green and gold, white buckskin breeches striped at the side with green and yellow, top boots and scimitars. Above him, another fresco depicts Haider Ali on an elephant sniffing a rose. His entourage contains no Europeans. A third painting shows the ill-fated Colonel Baillie wounded and a prisoner, sucking his forefinger as he is being carried in a palanquin to Seringapatam after the defeat at Perambakham. The British soldiers are armed with muskets, and wear cut-away scarlet coats displaying white and yellow facings, white trousers with a fine red stripe, and tall black shakos having a white plume in front.

The interior of the palace is most elaborately and beautifully painted and gilt, every inch of wall and ceiling being covered with a detailed mass of ornamentation. Narrow stairs, steep and dark, lead to an upper storey of many rooms, all opening out of one another and thence up again to a flat roof. During his two years' stay in Seringapatam Colonel Wellesley, afterwards the Duke of Wellington, resided in the Dary-a-Daulat.

A short drive in the car brought us to the Lal Bagh, entered by a gate-house effectively coloured red and white, surmounted by a *Naubhat Khana*, or Musicians' Gallery, crowded with big kettle-drums. Three straight walks, the centremost lined

with cypress trees, lead to the Gumbaz, a large domed mausoleum erected over the remains of Haider Ali by Tippu Sultan. Serried columns of polished black marble support the encircling verandah. The beautiful inlaid doors of sandalwood and ivory were presented by Lord Dalhousie in 1855. The window openings are filled with screens of fretted black marble through which a subdued light filters on to the low black marble sarcophagus over Tippu Sultan. It is covered with a scarlet pall strewn with roses. Beside him, at a higher level, are similar graves to his father and mother, while overhead stretches a purple *shamiana* fringed with gold.

The garden is surrounded by colonnaded cloisters. These served as a hospital for British troops after the capture of the island by Lord Cornwallis in 1792.

A short distance away, to north-west, is a walled enclosure filled with large box-shaped tombs. On the gate-post is written : " His Majesty's Cemetery, Ganjam, A.D. 1799–1808."

Back to the road through the Naubhat Khana, and straight on to a circular space ringed round with smooth grey walls. In the centre is a domed building, a funeral urn at each corner of the roof. The interior consists of a single octagonal room containing a cenotaph, and a marble wall tablet inscribed : " To the memory of Colonel William Baillie who, with a detachment of British troops under his command, after a noble and most gallant resistance to a superior force of the enemy on the plains of Perambakham was ultimately compelled to surrender to the united armies of Haider Ali and Tippu Sultan on the 10th September 1780, and died in the fortress

of Seringapatam on the 3rd November 1782. This monument is erected by his nephew, John Baillie, Lt.-Col. on the establishment of Bengal and Resident with the Court of Lucknow, A.D. 1816."

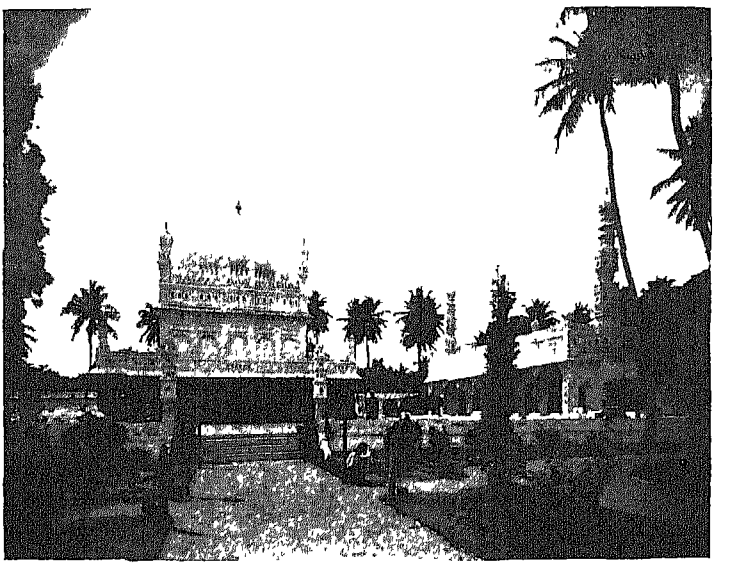
On the return journey we turned off to the left, following a broad side track lined with banyan trees, to Sabbal Rani, a tall white obelisk erected in mid-plain by the officers of His Majesty's 12th and 74th Regiments, to the memory of their comrades who fell at the siege of Seringapatam in 1799. It was very lonely out there on the wide spreading *maidan*, and strangely still under the vast evening sky. Dark against the horizon showed an occasional rugged hill as the sun followed his immemorial course over the western rim of the world, his departure signalled by a dazzling display of colours that, for a brief space, inundated the khaki plain with quivering light, and, spreading to Sabbal Rani, stained the tall white monument a delicate pink.

From there we drove rapidly to Scott's Bungalow, romantically situated in a large garden of many trees in an angle formed by the south branch of the Cauvery and a wide canal. Dusk had fallen as we wandered through the century-old house. Shadows carpeted the floors. The gloom of the corners was pregnant with memory. Old pictures hung in substantial frames on the dim walls. The old furniture stood in its accustomed place. Everything breathed order, care and refinement. Upstairs, dark though it was, the carved elephants gleamed on the high four-poster beds as though newly polished. Over all hovered "the tender grace of a day that is dead" mingled with an indefinable sense of something sinister. In a hushed voice,

as though fearful of the echoes, my companion told me the story. Here had dwelt a happy family. Childish feet had pattered over the silent floors. Curly heads had laid down to rest after the day's play dreaming happy dreams in the great four-poster beds. Then came a fatal morning when Colonel Scott went out as usual leaving all well at home. On his return he found the lifeless forms of his wife and children. Was it poison, cholera, or what? He did not pause to enquire. The distracted man rushed out of the house and was never seen or heard of again. Probably the mystery of his disappearance is known to the sharks which infest the green waters of the Cauvery flowing past his home.

It was dark as I returned to the car. Monkeys chattered angrily in the encircling trees, eager to hasten my departure. In the traveller's bungalow the ancient *matey* had prepared a savoury mess of curry and rice against my return. I ate it on the verandah by the light of one of the motor lamps, then to bed upon what had been my dinner table, with another joined to it, to sleep the deep sleep of one who has lived through much history in the space of a single day.

Nearly three centuries ago Tavernier complained of the difficulties then experienced by travellers in India, when endeavouring to obtain food supplies in country districts. Those were the gorgeous days of Moghul rule. Were the famous French jeweller to repeat his peregrinations now, and again venture off the beaten track, it is not improbable that he would echo the same lament. Such, in brief, were my reflections when, at 6 a.m., the *matey* of the



Presented by H H the Maharajah of Mysore

MAUSOLEUM OF TIPPOO SULTAN AND HYDER ALI, SERINGAPATAM

traveller's bungalow at Seringapatam tendered me two diminutive eggs, without accessories whatsoever, and some tea. He was very proud of the eggs. Apparently the hen is a *rara avis* in the neighbourhood. According to him, he had scoured the country far and wide in order to procure them.

Less than five minutes after leaving the bungalow I was back upon the main road, where I turned to the right. The sky was overcast and the atmosphere heavy and damp. Keeping the Fort on the left, the route to Bangalore crosses the Cauvery by the Wellesley Bridge, so called after the Governor-General. Constructed between 1802 and 1804 by Purnaiya, the celebrated Diwan of Mysore, it is a grey stone structure of local design. About 1,400 feet in length, it is supported by double lines of closely set pillars, not unlike those of a Hindu temple. For foundation it has the solid rock of the river bed. At the further end an inscribed stone obelisk records the date at which it was built, and the fact that it was dedicated to Richard, Marquis of Wellesley, brother of the famous Duke of Wellington.

To right, through a small village, near to which a milestone gives seventy-seven miles as the distance to Bangalore. The road was bad. Stones had been dumped down and then left. The result was that passing traffic was called upon to do the work of a steam-roller. Banyans lined the way, and paddy fields stretched on either side. Past a party of women clad in dark blue *saris* bordered with yellow, and over the old Kirangus Canal. A little further on, the road crossed the Lekapavani River, a tributary of the Cauvery.

Far off, to left, the vivid green of the rice-covered

plain was dominated by two towering masses of grey stone, the noted French Rocks. Deep ruts furrowed the highway, here flanked by small streams of clear water. The soil was red. Soon the road traversed the De Varoy Sagar channel, then commenced to ascend. Against the horizon, to right, a curious peacock-blue haze enveloped a ridge of mountains. Near the seventy-second milestone a large sign-board to left was inscribed "Krishnaraja High Level Canal Provisional Alignment, 1917." No traces of work were visible. Apparently the project was still in abeyance. From early times Mysore has possessed an extensive system of irrigation dependent upon the Cauvery. In 1905 the total length of channels concerned was returned as nine hundred and sixty-eight miles. The principal dams across the river are attributed to the Mysore king, Chikka Deva Raja (1672–1704).

To left stretched an ancient tank overlooked by a curious stone portal topped by a weather-worn statue of Nandi, the bull sacred to Siva. Close by lay the little village of Gagangur, its name clearly stated in capital letters on a board. Further along, but still on the same side, was Kodisattapura, a collection of red mud houses roofed with thatch or tiles. Some distance from the highway, to right, the monotonous level of the plain was broken by a white Hindu temple and a *droog*, or boulder-strewn hillock, one of those curious isolated eminences of rock characteristic of the district, and which constitute its most remarkable feature.

Near the sixty-ninth milestone a sign-post, on the left, pointed towards French Rocks, eight miles distant, where there is a railway station. Had time

allowed I should have turned aside in search of the ancient village of Sravana Belagola, famed for one of the most remarkable statues in the world, a gigantic Jain figure, fifty feet high, carved out of solid rock. Here, according to tradition, supported by ancient inscriptions, Chandra Gupta, founder of the great Mauryan dynasty, died in the 3rd century B.C., after spending the closing years of his life in religious retirement.

The next village passed was Talukero. This boasted a police station styled Lingerajachatra. A little more and I ran through Sandahalli, a hamlet set in the midst of flat country sparingly dotted with trees, but singularly free from cactus. The sixty-fourth milestone marked the approach to Indavalu, whereafter the road ran parallel with the railway line which pursued a straight course between hedges of aloes. At Kallahalli the road crossed the line and started upon a stretch of uncrushed stones. Mirror-like, a sheet of water flashed into sight on the left. Here white and grey paddy birds had collected, and appeared to be combining business with pleasure in their pursuit of frogs.

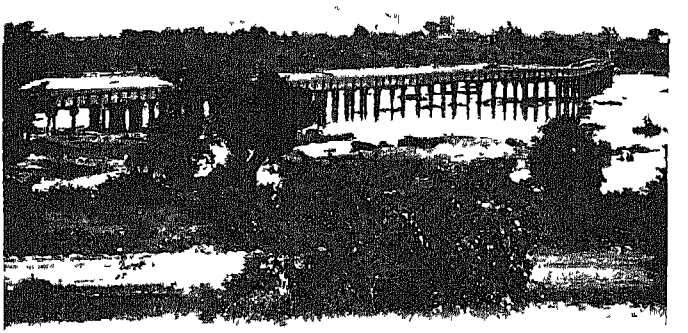
Through the town of Mandya, its long bazaar irregularly lined with tall palm trees. Beyond, to left, lay an old stone tank of many steps. Not far from the sixtieth milestone the Hebbahalla bridge spanned an almost dry river bed. A little more, and the road again traversed the railway line. Pools of water to right told of recent heavy rain. The country was flat and uninteresting as the car continued in a northerly direction. Unlike the curate's egg, the road could not even be described as "good in parts." It alternated between patches

of uncrushed stones, and long stretches deeply rutted and still further broken by holes.

The fifty-seventh milestone found the highway traversing a somewhat desolate waste of uncultivated country. Goats and some skeleton-like cows were in possession, as were a number of doves. Occasionally a brown and white Brahmani kite winged its flight solemnly, as befitted so sacred a bird. Beyond the village of Budawur a few very old trees lined the road. The country was level excepting in the extreme east, where hills showed misty blue against the grey rim of the horizon.

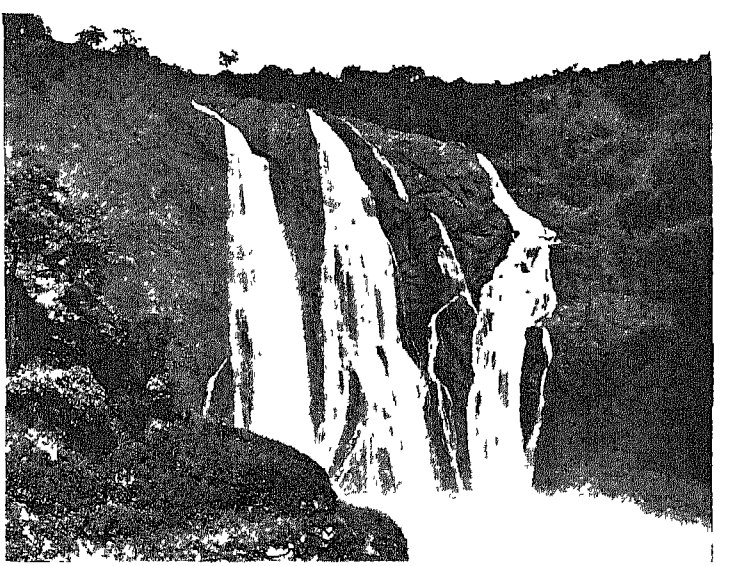
For some time the scenery continued dull and uninteresting. A welcome break in the monotony was a square sheet of water to right, near the fifty-first milestone. This was succeeded by a picturesque display of trees, boulders and a canal in the immediate neighbourhood of Maddur, a townlet possessing a reading-room, schoolhouse and—proudest boast of all—a history.

Situated near the right bank of the Shimsha, it was originally known as Marudar, and was a place of some importance at a very early age. Under the Ganga dynasty it formed part of the Chukka Gangavadi. Later on it passed to the Cholas, non-Aryan invaders from Lower Bengal, who descended upon Southern India by way of the sea, and whose warriors were distinguished by the chaplets of *ar* which they wore in battle. It next owed allegiance to the Hoysalas, whose king, Vishnuvardhana, bestowed it upon the Brahmans as an *agrahara*, or *jagir*, for the upkeep of the Varadaraja temple which he built there. In course of time a fort was erected. This was captured by Mysore in 1617. Rebuilt and



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STONE BRIDGE OVER THE CAUVERY, SERINGAPATAM



Presented by H H the Maharajah of Mysore

THE CAUVERY FALLS

strengthened by Haider Ali, it fell to Lord Cornwallis in 1791, by whose orders it was dismantled.

Despite its long and stormy history, Maddur presented a singularly peaceful appearance as I motored through its main street in the grey light of a sunless morning. The country beyond was carpeted with the brilliant green of rice fields shaded by numerous palms. Near the village of Shivapur white water-lilies completely covered a large pond with beautiful effect. At the fifty-eighth mile a bridge crossed the river Shimsha. Banyan trees formed an avenue leading to Somanahalla, a hamlet with no claim to special distinction, unless a muddy tank may be so described. A little more, and the village of Rudakshupur was passed on the left. Here the slender minarets of an *Idgah* showed white against the green of a palm tope. Hay-stacks, a large white mansion effectively decorated with turquoise blue, and a big Muhammadan mosque were the chief objects of note at Nidaghatta. Small palms mingled with the banyans and tamarinds bordering the highway. The landscape was dotted with groves of palm. To left stretched a tree-clad ridge.

An upright post inscribed " Mysore " on one side, and " Bangalore " on the other, stood beside the forty-fourth milestone. At this point the road ran due east. An eminence to left was completely covered with boulders, so precariously poised as to represent quite remarkable feats of balance. In front, the hills rose in a semi-circle against the sky. Four miles further on, the village of Bairapulna lay on the left. The land was green with rice and sugar-cane. Men and women were busy weeding the red

carth. The car bumped over a particularly bad stretch of road to a bridge spanning a dry river bed. On the bank stood a picturesque Hindu temple, and beyond was the village of Chikmulla. An extensive palm tope stretched away to the left, and I caught the white gleam of another *Idgah*.

A long string of transport wagons emerged slowly from Chenapatna. The bazaar appeared singularly well stocked with vegetables. In addition, the place has acquired a reputation as producing excellent steel wire, of superfine quality, for the strings of musical instruments, likewise lacquer-ware, glass bracelets and toys. On emerging from the town a big tank is seen to the right, also a domed mausoleum and a number of other Muhammadan graves. Among them is the tomb of Akil Shah Kadu, religious preceptor to Tippu Sultan, and that of Sayyid Ibrahim, Commandant of Bangalore, gratefully remembered for his humane treatment of those British prisoners of war, captured by Tippu, who were fortunate enough to be transferred to his custody.

For a while the road ran through well-wooded country. The views were varied and pretty, and there was a cool breeze. Near the thirty-fifth milestone a large signboard on the right attracted attention to the Government Silk Farm. To left, the railway line was seen running parallel with the highway, here bordered by trees and a picturesque tangle of undergrowth, through which an occasional grey aloe thrust its spiked grey leaves. Thirty-four miles from Bangalore the road traversed the railway line. Hardly was I across than a train thundered past.

After this the surface of the country was uneven and covered with small trees and scrub. The ascent was gradual, and tall red ant-heaps reappeared at either side of the route with decorative effect. At the thirty-first milestone the hills seemed very near. They were the usual masses of rock and loose boulders, vegetation growing where it could secure roothold. Long-tailed monkeys, of a light grey colour, kept up a constant resentful clamour in the trees.

Across Chetpet bridge of many arches, and into the red-roofed village immediately beyond. Midway, the road to Bangalore turned abruptly to the left, traversing a bazaar bordered with tall palms, which thrust their green tops unceremoniously through the roofs of verandahs and even of houses themselves. Hills stretched to left and right, their rocky outline suggesting the ramparts of some gigantic citadel of ancient legend. A company of mounted Lancers clattered past. The road continued to ascend. Stones had recently been laid down and were badly in need of a steam-roller.

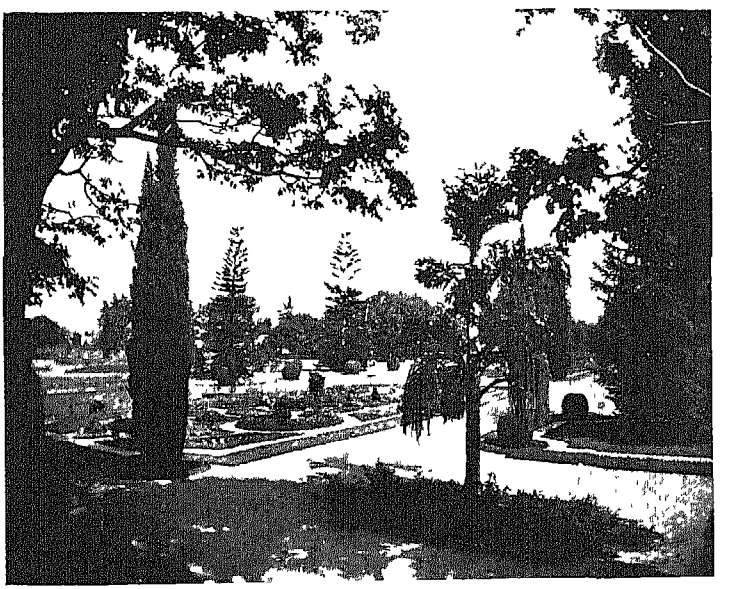
Near the twenty-sixth milestone I halted under a big banyan tree to cool the engine. The air was delightfully fresh. Above the twittering of birds, and the chatter of innumerable monkeys, the dull booming of cannon could be heard from the direction of Bangalore. On past Hulton State Forest, and through the village of Bidadi. Here the road again traversed the railway line. I failed to see any warning post, or caution mark, an omission which I had already noted at the previous crossing.

The route was well provided with stone rests for loads. Close to the village of Kengeri some carved

cobra slabs leant against the trees. To left was a long stretch of water.

The country presented a wild irregular appearance, overgrown with bush, and insignificant trees plentifully interspersed with ant-hills. Mangoes, palms and a tangled hedge bordered the route. Near the fifth milestone the yellow buildings of the Mysore Government Central Distillery were seen on the left, and the Mysore Tannery Company on the right. The next object of note was an old Christian burial ground. This was speedily followed by a post marking the municipal boundary. Here there was a parting of the ways. One arm of the sign-board pointed ahead to Bangalore city and railway station, and the other to the Fort Gate, a mile and a half further along, on the right. Four annas toll was levied by the octroi station. In exchange I received a receipt couched in pious language, explaining that this fee was charged "in the name of Him, the Most Merciful." Edifying though this was, it would have been still more so had the road been better kept. Following the Fort Road to right, I passed a large tank on the left and was soon in a busy street thronged with people.

Bangalore has been greatly extended since a portion of it was transferred to the British, as an assigned tract, for military cantonments in exchange for Seringapatam, restored to Mysore at the Rendition of 1881. Not only is it the seat of the Government of Mysore, and the capital of the Bangalore district, it also constitutes the headquarters of the Ninth Secunderabad Division. During the course of its long and varied history it has frequently



Presented by H.H. the Maharaja of Mysore
THE TAJ TAGH, BANGALORE

changed hands in the numerous political shuffles to which the country has been subjected. In the seventeenth century it formed part of the *jagir* of Shahaji, father of the famous Sivaji, founder of the Maratha Empire. Upon Shahaji's death, Bangalore passed to his youngest son, Venkaji, who sold it to the Raja of Mysore for three *lakhs* of rupees.

The Maharaja's Palace occupies high ground, while the Residency stands at the top of Cubbon Road. The old city is known as the Pettah. To south of the Fort is the Basangudi Extension, each of its four main roads a hundred feet wide. These accord with the cardinal points of the compass as laid down in ancient Indian principles of architecture, which ruled that the plan of all towns and villages should conform with that of the cosmic right-angle, otherwise the magic square. The Code of Manu further stipulated that the four principal streets should be occupied by Brahmans, the next by Kshatriyas; the Vaisyas and Sudras taking third and fourth place, respectively.

In Bangalore this law has been somewhat modified to suit modern conditions. To-day questions of race and religion claim a share of consideration as well as those pertaining purely to caste. The result is that not only Brahmans, but Muhammadans, Hindus, Lingayets and local Christians are allotted their particular sphere of influence in the magic square.

Continuing in the direction of Cantonments, I ran past a tall yellow obelisk to the memory of those British who fell during the victorious campaign of 1799, against Tippu Sultan. Along Sydney Road

and then to the left, by a handsome statue of Queen Victoria. Through Cubbon Lines, and so to the railway station.

It was 10.30 a.m., and I was hungry. Making straight for the refreshment room I learnt that meals are only served at the city station. Tea, however, was obtainable, likewise tinned salmon and bread. Profiting by my experience at Seringapatam I laid in a stock of provisions, namely, a couple of loaves, two bottles of soda-water, and one tin each of sardines, tongue and milk.

On again at 12 p.m. Halting at a shop *en route* I had no difficulty in procuring four gallons of petrol, then along the principal street lined with European shops, to a red church. To left, down Old Madras Road, and into Ulsur. Before long the municipal boundary lay behind as I sped over a good straight road shaded with trees. At either side the land was cultivated and cattle seemed plentiful. The railway cut through the fields to left. At Krishnarajapuram there is a station, and the main thoroughfare crosses the line. Here the country was flat. Each village had its tank, or pond, but no longer displayed a nameboard as on the Mysore side. Curiously enough the fact that they were, henceforward, unidentified seemed to rob them of interest and individuality.

After a bad stretch of uncrushed stones, the road began to climb uphill between the twelfth and thirteenth milestones. Grazing ground, of the usual poor kind, lay at either side. On the right a sign-post pointed four miles to Kotgodi. Beyond, in a depression, was a pond white with lotus blooms. A more extensive stretch of water appeared on the left.

Fifteen miles from Bangalore the road again deteriorated. A traveller's bungalow, on the right, showed red amid the green of the trees.

Past a signpost on the left indicating the direction of Chintamani. The main road was well shaded with large trees as it pursued a winding course across the plain, jungle on one hand and scrub on the other. Tanks and ponds were frequent. In the middle distance, to left, stretched a mountain ridge. A lake and three wells in a row were seen on the right. Near by some heavily laden bullock-wagons were experiencing considerable difficulty in getting over a bad piece of road.

Twenty-seven miles from Bangalore, a lake and a rocky ridge introduced a little variety into the rather monotonous landscape. Excepting for this, the country was flat with a tendency to slope gently up at the horizon. Finally, the long-expected happened. The stones did their work, and a puncture compelled me to stop. This delayed me until 2 p.m.

Jungle and scrub served as introduction to the Kolar district; rocky ridges rose to south and east. The road ascended gradually, and gaps occurred, with increasing frequency, in the trees bordering the way. The scenery became wilder and more boulder-strewn. Over two small bridges and past a man walking on stilts. On the highway wound amid great rocks and desolate hills, the stony wilderness brightened by the occasional green of a small tree or shrub. Along the bank of a muddy *jhil* and past a village of the usual type, namely mud walls and roofs of thatch. Everywhere innumerable monkeys broke into angry expostu-

lation as the car approached. There was no mistaking their political views. They were protectionists of an extreme type.

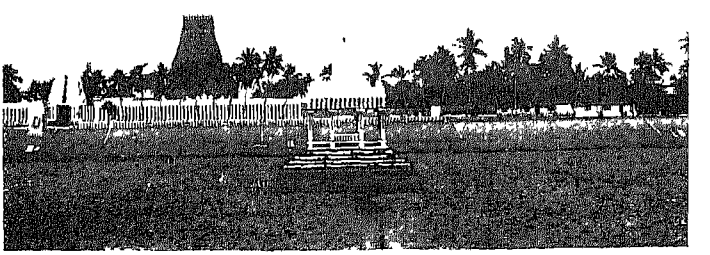
At thirty-eight miles the road curved to left round the point of a rocky ridge. Soon a handsome *Idgah* was sighted. Over the railway line and past an imposing *masjid* enclosed by a square wall. Outside, to east, were scattered a number of Muhammadan tombs. Again the road inclined to the left, skirted a large sheet of water and entered the town of Kolar.

Now best known in connection with the neighbouring gold fields, in operation since 1876, the place is of considerable historical interest as the capital of the old Gangavadi dynasty founded by two princes of the Solar Line, who, wandering southwards, established their headquarters at Kolar in the second century A.D. For defence, the town mainly relied upon the fortified hill of Nandidroog, the mere mention of which evokes sinister memories. From its rocky summit many a British prisoner of war was hurled to death, by command of Tippu Sultan, for refusing to enter his service. It was reduced by Lord Cornwallis in 1791.

After leaving Kolar the country was more or less level with occasional patches of cultivation. Trees, principally tamarind, lined the road. A puncture called a halt and attracted the usual friendly crowd of onlookers. Near the fiftieth milestone a curious monument on the left excited my curiosity. It was raised upon a square granite platform, and consisted of a large stone casket, some six feet long and about three feet deep, elaborately and beautifully carved with Hindu figures. On the



BUCKINGHAM CANAL, NEAR GREENAWAY ROAD, MADRAS



MYLAPORE TEMPLE, MADRAS

opposite side of the way was a quadrangular enclosure surrounded by high narrow slabs of granite. Three miles further on, a gaunt hill rose abruptly to left of the road. Another great whale-shaped boulder lay to left. Here the country was strewn with big stones and ledges of rock, intermingled with a little scrub and some rare grass. In the distance the mountains showed, shadowlike, against the grey sky. The road wound uphill. Two gaily painted *jutkas* rattled along at a brisk pace. Suddenly a warning bang announced another puncture. The annoying part of it was that it happened to be the brand new tyre only recently put on.

It was 4.25 p.m. when I restarted. I ran past a rocky eminence to left, and then, gingerly, over a stretch of uncrushed stones. Through the village of Mahagal, conspicuous for some Hindu *samadhs*, Muhammadan tombs and the *gopurams* of a Dravidian temple. A traveller's bungalow, set in a large bare compound, lay to left. Nearby some women were twisting rope, the extremity of each length fastened to the trunk of a tree. The highway wound on through wild boulder-strewn country. At the sixty-first mile it skirted a handsome tank of many steps, evidently a place of some sanctity. Hindu temples clustered on its bank, and in the centre, island-like, stood a stone pavilion crowned by an ornate *gopuram*. The placid water gleamed with a faint yellow reflection of the pallid sunset, rapidly fading behind the distant hills. A little more and yet another puncture brought the car to a standstill. The spot was singularly desolate, and not without a certain rugged grandeur. On the highest point of a cactus-encircled group of rocks

stood a tall, dark Muhammadan. His red fez struck a bright note of colour in the wilderness as he chanted his evening prayer, his face turned towards the wan radiance of the setting sun, beyond which lay Mecca. His voice reached me faintly, in a monotonous sing-song, as I worked away at the tyre.

On again at 6.15 into the silence and gathering gloom. It was very hushed but for the shrill croaking of frogs. Flocks and herds were being driven home, rendering it necessary to proceed with caution. The darkness came on swiftly. There were no stars or moon, the night being overcast as the day had been. Sombre shadowy figures glided past in single file, sometimes in the fields, at others in the road. Now and again a cart, showing no lights, appeared unexpectedly out of the night immediately in front of the car, calling for a swift turn to left, or right, in order to avoid a collision. Suddenly a red flare, as of many torches, blazed up through the darkness. A procession wound into sight. In the midst vague figures bore aloft a crimson palanquin. For a moment it almost seemed as though I were one of those privileged mortals vouchsafed a vision of King Vetal, the ghost-god, and his demon host. The illusion was soon dispelled. Behind the drawn curtains sat a little bride, gaily decked in wedding finery, as they carried her through the night to her husband's home and the great adventure of married life. Speedily the glare of the torches and the brief romance were swallowed up in the all-enveloping blackness.

The motor lamps shed a faint white illumination

on the road immediately ahead. At either side stretched the jungle, its mysterious depths aglow with myriad dancing points of light as fireflies darted hither and thither in the tangled maze. Now and then a breath of perfume from hidden flowers escaped to sweeten the damp hot air.

Through a sleeping village, its silence abruptly shattered by the sharp barking of dogs. Another plunge into the jungle, which pressed closer than before. Seemingly the road was never ending. The heavy darkness was breathless and oppressive. It clung about one with the insistent stifling embrace of a fog. There was something uncanny in the invitation of the fireflies as they danced, will-o'-the-wisp-like, amid the densely growing trees. The locked branches arched overhead converting the road into a tunnel.

At last a village! The approach was dark and silent. From the further end came the reflection of a bright light, and the loud beating of tom-toms. I made towards the illumination and the music. Beyond the last house, in a clearing on the left, stood a large tent brilliantly lit up. A band was playing, and innumerable kettle-drums. The scene was as curious as unexpected. I was wondering what it meant when a young man appeared and told me that it was a Buddhist circus, of which he was the manager. They were on their way to Mysore and had halted for a rest after three days' trek through the jungle. Upon this he produced a chair and invited me to sit down. The name of the village, he informed me, was Palamaner. Yes, there was a *musafir* bungalow. I had passed it, as I entered, on the left. At this hour it was shut.

The caretaker lived some distance away but he would send for him.

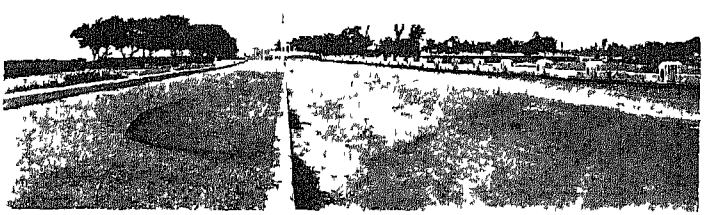
After awhile, my patience being exhausted, I made my way back through the village which, profoundly indifferent to the lure of the circus, lay wrapped in slumber and inky darkness. At the gate of the *musafir* bungalow I took one of the motor lamps and proceeded upon a reconnaissance. The caretaker and his staff had arrived but had brought no light. Without loss of time I attacked a tin of tongue and some bread. The problem was what to drink? The two bottles of soda-water had long since been exhausted. The murky liquid tendered by the *matey* seemed to swarm with cholera and other germs. I was just about to risk it when an unexpected light shone upon the threshold, illuminating the figure of the circus manager. In one hand he bore a steaming pot of coffee and, in the other, a brass *lotah* filled with milk. The latter, he hastened to assure me, was boiled, furthermore it was from his own cow, price twenty rupees. Like Mary's lamb, wherever he went, that cow was sure to go.

I soon discovered that whatever else Palamaner might lack it was abundantly stocked with mosquitoes. There seemed less of them in the compound, so I caused the wooden couch to be carried outside. Here, lulled by the distant sound of tom-toms, I was soon oblivious alike to mosquitoes, the hot clammy night, and the perils of milk and water, perils as fraught with menace to the traveller of to-day as they were when Tavernier uttered his historical lament.

Daylight dispelled the mystery of my surround-



MOUBRAY ROAD, NEAR GEORGE KUPPAM, MADRAS



THE MARINA, MADRAS

ings. I awoke to find myself in a pretty garden. By some magical process, dawn had transformed the dark and forbidding building of the night before into a picturesque bungalow of red walls, white verandah and shelving thatched roof. Unfortunately the fairest view fails to assuage the pangs of hunger and thirst. The coffee, promised for 6 a.m., by the *matey*, was not forthcoming. Cutting short his explanations I paid his bill of four annas for the night's entertainment, and at 6.25 a.m. started off in quest of breakfast in some more hospitable neighbourhood than that of Palamaner.

At the further end of the village a signpost gave a hundred and twenty-one miles as the distance to Madras. To left the great circus tent lay silent and grey. Quenched were its many lights, and the voice of its tom-toms was still. A similar hush pervaded the Forest Range Office. Not so the toll-gate, where I was summoned to deliver six annas.

Tamarinds lined the route, which speedily wound its way into the jungle, a dense tangle of trees and undergrowth. The road zig-zagged uphill and down. Triangular caution marks gave timely warning of sharp corners. To left a tree-clad peak, capped with loose boulders, rose abruptly above the forest. The atmosphere was heavy and airless. All around a mysterious rustling, vague whispers, and a subdued humming testified to the swarming life inhabiting the dark green underworld. To unaccustomed ears the only articulate sounds in the chorus were the cooing of doves and the cackling of jungle fowl. Long trailing creepers

writhed and twined about the tree trunks. Flowers, plants, bush and bramble struggled together on the ground. Under cover of the all-enveloping greenery, bright deadly things glided on their various missions —snakes, scorpions and a thousand other denizens of the forest, nameless, unseen, but insistent in their appeal to the imagination.

There was a curious fascination about the scene. The whole land lay under the spell of the jungle. The winding road, like a grey cordon, pressed back the trees at either side. A cluster of brilliant yellow lilies flamed suddenly on the left, and a big lemon-coloured lizard, with a head like a gargoyle and bulging eyes, darted into sight, and as rapidly out again. Further on, a parting in the trees framed a large pond aglow with tall pink lotus. The car bumped badly as it zig-zagged downhill over a particularly rough stretch of road. To right a single line of telegraph wires put in a brief appearance. Past a big Dravidian temple. Near the entrance stood a towering processional car, its elaborate carvings swathed in thatch. Beyond here the jungle, which had temporarily receded, closed in again. An old masonry tank lay to left. Shortly afterwards the hundred and twelfth milestone came into sight. Behind the jungle, to left, stretched a ridge of mountains. Yet another imposing Dravidian temple to Vishnu, its principal gateway surmounted by a lofty *gopuram*, outside which, strange incongruity, waited a motor car. Can it be that the day is not far off when history will repeat itself, and the gods will take their annual airing, like Ravana of old, the ten-headed demon king of Ceylon, in a flying machine?

Through a substantially built village overlooked by a rocky hillock. On either side a long line of jagged mountains bounded the distant horizon. Across a stone bridge and into wild country, boulder-strewn, cactus and scrub growing here and there. A transient gleam of brown water to left of the highway, and the vivid green of sprouting rice; then a small village of palm-thatched huts, and a number of lean hogs—" razor backs " the Americans would call them—rooting in the poor soil.

For several miles the landscape continued wild and broken with rock. Throughout this desolate tract the road was prettily lined by an avenue of trees, chiefly tamarind, banyan and the yellow-blossomed portia. Buffaloes were at work near a hamlet, ploughing the heavy mud of paddy fields. A rocky *droog* shot up unexpectedly by the wayside, and a signpost pointed a hundred and eight miles to Madras. Soon afterwards a stone bridge negotiated the dry bed of a river. This was followed by an avenue of tamarind trees. Through the locked branches overhead, the hot sunlight shot quivering golden darts on to the dusty highway. A two-armed board indicated Chittoor a mile and a half further on to the left. The Old Madras Road bore to right, where it rapidly disappeared among hillocks of the usual stony variety and great boulders.

Before leaving Ootacamund I had been told that Chittoor boasted a refreshment-room at the railway station. My informants, who had recently motored up that way from Madras, added that they had lunched there and done themselves well. On the strength of this I decided to turn aside and get

some breakfast. Spurred on by the pangs of hunger I sped rapidly down an arched avenue of very fine trees, to be abruptly summoned to halt at a toll-gate, where I was mulcted another fee of six annas. Passing through the town I finally reached the crowded railway station. The platform was overflowing with passengers, who also swarmed about the approach and blocked the entrance. To search for a responsible official seemed as futile as looking for a needle in the proverbial bundle of hay. Further investigation revealed the fact that there was no refreshment-room, and never had been one. Soda-water? The stationmaster replied in the negative. With this he beckoned to a man and told him to guide me to the Municipal bungalow. The fellow swung on to the side of the car. Directed by him I again traversed the town and penetrated some distance into the country, when he intimated that he had lost his bearings. I promptly dropped him overboard as supercargo, turning a deaf ear to his demands for payment. Going back to Chittoor I eventually, by dint of many stops and much questioning, succeeded in locating the traveller's bungalow, which proved to be within a quarter of a mile of the railway station. Here I found an intelligent *matey* in charge, good rooms, beds and other conveniences of civilization. How soon could I have breakfast? Not for two hours. It would take quite that time to prepare a curry. In the end a compromise was effected whereby he agreed to let me have a couple of boiled eggs, some of my own bread toasted, and tea. A coolie was

despatched to the bazaar for soda-water. By 8.30 a.m. I was again on my way.

After leaving the Municipal bungalow I kept straight on in the direction of the railway station. At a signpost inscribed "Vellore 21½ miles" I turned sharply to right, skirting a series of boulder-piled hillocks. It was very hot, and the sun beat down full upon the dusty highway. A brick-kiln lay to left. Near by some cattle charged the car, one heifer getting so close that it had to be beaten off with a stick. Through a tile-roofed village, and into the welcome shade of an avenue of miscellaneous trees, among which palms mingled but did not blend. A rocky ridge restricted the view on the left. Into the jungle, and on to where the Old Madras Road joined the highway to Vellore near a signpost marked "Madras 95 miles." The route wound through trees, past stone tanks, sculptured shrines and villages, the mud walls and thatched roofs of which last looked singularly picturesque amid the encircling green.

The road ran between the points of two rocky ridges emerging to command an extensive panorama of wild country, boulder strewn and dotted with bush. Cactus supplemented the trees lining the way. The air was hot and breathless, but for the slight breeze made by the car as it bumped along the uneven road. Lizards were present in considerable variety, and in some beautiful and curious combinations of colour. Tall, upright stacks of rice appeared in a paddy field to left. Down-hill and into jungle. Tree-clad knolls sprang up in all directions. Finally the road split into a

fork. The main thoroughfare branched to right leading through Vellore to Madras, a distance of eighty-seven miles according to the signpost. As far as the eye could see it ran broad, smooth and inviting under a noble avenue of trees. To left, bare, narrow and sunny stretched the Rice Causeway, so called after the late Collector of Chingleput. I was strongly tempted to continue via Vellore, but a friend in Ootacamund had spoken with no uncertain voice in favour of the other route. According to him, it was not only the better and more direct of the two, it also meant a saving of at least twenty miles.

Very much against my inclination I turned to the left along the Rice Causeway. At either side, at a lower level, stretched paddy fields. Soon a milestone gave eighty-six miles as the distance to Madras. This was a bit of a shock in view of the twenty miles which, according to my informant, I was to have economised. Speedily all traces of cultivation disappeared to be replaced by rocks and scrub. The road curved a great deal, and crossed the railway line near the eighty-fourth milestone. A herd of pigs were rooting in a palm tope. Up hill and down. All around the horizon was bounded by a broken circle of hills. Goats and sheep were grazing on the arid plain. The road was raised on a high, narrow embankment exposed to the full glare of the sun, the trees, like angels' visits, being few and far between.

Past a very old man, bent double under a heavy load of glass bracelets, as he trudged uphill to Tirirvallan, then a cluster of thatched houses set amid cactus. Here a toll-keeper, armed with a

red flag, demanded six annas. To the left a board indicated the direction in which lay Pannai, eleven miles distant. Midway through the bazaar of a picturesque village backed by tall palms, a sign-board inscribed "Madras Causeway" pointed sharply to the left. A large Dravidian temple was safeguarded by a high outer wall vertically striped with red and white, a towering *gopuram* surmounting the main gate. Across the wide Pallah River, its bed as dry as the proverbial bone. Under a railway arch to where buffaloes were basking blissfully in muddy pools. The country was flat as a table excepting where, far away to the left, stretched a jagged line of hills. The prevailing colour was khaki flecked with the green of palm topes.

At the seventy-first milestone a side track, on the right, branched off to Ranipet Station where, according to my Ootacamund acquaintance, who knew the road well, there was a refreshment-room. Making a detour I ran up to the station only to repeat the experience of Chittoor. There was nothing for it but to return to the main road, having gone two miles out of the way for nothing. To left of the thoroughfare the tops of some early nineteenth-century tombs showed above the walls of a square enclosure. On the opposite side rose an abandoned racquet court and, a little further on, a second graveyard filled with the monuments in vogue in the days of the East India Company. Palms bordered the route, and a double line of telegraph wires stretched overhead.

A large stone tank and a Dravidian temple characterized the approach to Wallajahpet. In the

bazaar a gaily caparisoned bull, with jingling bells, was wandering from stall to stall commandeering what it pleased. Beyond the village, to right, by a big cruciform tank filled with bright green water, were the immense seated figures of two stone gods, fully twenty feet high.

For a little while sugar-cane showed by the road-side. It was rapidly succeeded by a small variety of cactus, nowhere more than two feet in height. Another brief interlude of cultivation consisting of rice and sugar-cane. Hillocks were visible in the left, otherwise the country was flat. The road was bare of shade and intensely hot. A flash of white water-lilies in a ruined tank. Two miles further on I halted to cool the car and refill the radiator, beneath the protecting branches of three yellow blossomed portia trees in the village of Ramapuram. Near by lay a big brown masonry tank, its many broken steps revealing traces of elaborate and beautiful carving, a heritage from that age of which the poet sings—

> "In the olden days of Art,
> Builders worked with greatest care,
> Each minute and hidden part:
> For the gods see everywhere."

The usual crowd collected, including all the children of the neighbourhood. Information regarding the route was proffered by a wayfarer clad in a manner that merits description. His elaborate turban consisted of scarlet, blue and magenta rags. A faded purple scarf was knotted about his throat above a shirt of red and grey check. His *dhoti* was of khaki cotton bordered with orange, and over his

left shoulder he wore a heavy multi-coloured *razai*. For sole luggage he carried a stout traveller's staff.

Upon leaving Ramapuram the road ran straight and was lined with trees, mostly tamarind, palm and portia. To right, amid paddy fields, rose a spreading Dravidian temple crowned by eighteen *gopurams*. Soon the trees ceased. The highway continued hot and shadeless through a monotonous stretch of flooded rice patches. Finally it entered a banyan avenue shortly to emerge bare as before. The car jolted along over ruts and holes, between neat piles of broken stones, which last, from their appearance and the condition of the road, seemed to have been there for a considerable time. Near the fifty-fourth mile a post marked the boundary between North Arcot and Chingleput. The plain stretched to the horizon, its flat surface broken only by a few *bahbuls*, and the lofty *gopuram* of a temple near the big village of Dambul. The left arm of a signpost pointed towards Musurpakam, and the right to the ancient town of Conjeeveram. The latter lies forty miles west-south-west of Madras.

Known to history, and to the people generally as Kanchipuram, or the "glittering city," it was long the celebrated capital of the Pallavas, a dynasty which had a bull for crest and a club for standard. Practically nothing definite is known regarding the origin of this early people. It is surmised, however, that they were invaders from Persia, who gradually fought their way southwards.

Conjeeveram is one of the seven sacred Hindu cities, ranking second only to Benares in point of holiness. Its temples are legion. Many are of immense historical interest owing to their inscrip-

tions. No less than a hundred and twenty-eight of the most important shrines are dedicated to Siva, and twenty-seven to Vishnu. At one period it was a Buddhist stronghold. As such it was visited by Hiuen Tsang, the celebrated Chinese pilgrim, in the seventh century A.D. He described it as containing some hundreds of *sangharamas*, and ten thousand priests who studied the teachings of the Sthavera School belonging to the Great Vehicle.

Many legends are recounted of Kanchi. Among others, popular belief credits it with being the place where the great Trimurti, or Divine Triad—Brahma, Siva and Vishnu—celebrated their nuptials. Here, too, Parvati is held to have done penance for plunging the world into darkness by placing her hands over the eyes of Siva, her consort, and so obscuring the light of the sun and the moon. The "glittering city" is likewise accounted the birth-place of Lakshmi, the Goddess of Good Fortune, and of Sarasvati, Goddess of Learning. In Kanchi, too, Rama worshipped on his return from slaying Ravana, the ten-headed demon king of Ceylon.

For a while the route to Madras was identical with that leading to the old Pallava capital. The view was flat and open. Cattle were grazing, and a grove of casuarina trees showed, in the distance, dark green and motionless in the yellow glare of the sun. On the left what seemed a great carpet of glowing purple resolved itself into a pond choked with vivid mauve water hyacinths, in strange and beautiful contrast to the red earth. Through a large village. In the centre was a picturesque tank, its many steps in a remarkably good state of preser-

vation. Near the forty-eighth milestone the ways divided. A signboard pointed towards Conjeeveram on the right. Far off, majestic *gopurams* showed grey against the blue sky, marking the site of the holy city.

Bearing to left I jolted along an uneven track, shadeless but for an occasional palm. Across the railway and past a signpost on the left pointing towards Arkonam. Further on the road traversed a palm tope noisy with the cackling of geese. I noticed a quantity of pretty green birds with long tails. A great hawk stalked majestically along the raised ridge of a paddy field. For the next few miles the shadeless causeway traversed flat red country. The road was badly in need of repair, despite the neat banks of broken stone wherewith it was lined. At the thirty-seventh mile a man with a red flag demanded a toll. Into the welcome shade of an acacia avenue then, all too soon, out again into the sunshine. Away to left a patch of dull green represented a grove of casuarina trees. A long hot stretch terminated in a second avenue. Progress was slow and uncomfortable owing to the broken condition of the thoroughfare. Another toll-gate near a large stone tank, then a small palm-thatched village picturesquely set in the midst of tamarind trees. Past some cattle, the heifers again essaying to charge the car, and a third toll-gate.

The country was flat. Rounded hill-tops showed far off to right. In the middle distance grew casuarina trees. On the opposite side were palms. At the twenty-seventh milestone the road branched off to Vandalur on the right. Keeping to left, I

ran into a jungle. Beyond, a tall *gopuram* stood sentinel near the entrance to Sriverperambatur, the birthplace of Ramanaijachari, a big village, its wide main street overlooked by Dravidian temples literally bristling with *gopurams*. Into an avenue of acacia amid which mingled the conspicuous sausage tree, so called from its heavy brown pods the size and shape of a cucumber, or large sausage. Botanically known both as *Kigelia Pinnata* and as *Madagascar Bignoniacea*, it was first imported into India between forty and fifty years ago. The parent tree is a magnificent specimen and stands in the Horticultural Gardens, Madras. Its seedlings have been distributed widespread, hence the tree is now a common one in the neighbourhood. It is also remarkable for its orchid-like flowers in a curious blend of green and crimson. These hang down from the branches in clusters to a depth of several feet, earning the tree the Tamil nickname of *globe marum*, as its blossoms are held to resemble chandeliers. Strangers to the locality immediately remark the tree and enquire its name and history. It is surprising how few, even among the residents of Madras, can satisfy their curiosity.

Out into flat country. Hills showed dimly against the sky to left. To right rose three distant cloud-like eminences. Tamarinds bordered the route. Cultivation appeared in patches, the intermediate spaces choked with cactus. Goats were plentiful. At twenty-one miles the road was particularly bad. To left *dhobis* were leisurely engaged in the congenial pursuit of dashing clothes to pieces on the stones of the dirtiest tank I ever remember having seen. Shortly afterwards the causeway ran

along the top of an embankment. At either side rain trees and cactus acted as parapet, the interlaced branches meeting in a pretty green arch overhead. Upon reaching level ground again the car entered a fine banyan avenue, ran through a casuarina grove, and between tall pillars of pyramidal form built of flat red bricks topped by sculptured spherical capitals of smooth granite. These curious columns appeared at irregular intervals amid the trees bounding the thoroughfare. Subsequent enquiries elicited the fact that they were old telegraph posts. On the left a number of carved stone bulls formed a parapet about the high walls of a ruined Dravidian temple. The country here was well wooded, palms growing in great abundance. The bad state of the road made it necessary to drive slowly.

Into the picturesque village of Poonamallee, a narrow lane on the left leading to the great Perumal Temple. To right, set back from the highway, was a large white Muhammadan mosque. Beyond the busy bazaar silence reigned behind the walls of an old God's acre on the left, crowded with tall monuments. On the opposite side, screened from the road by trees, were some big red buildings, respectively a convalescent barrack for British troops and a military hospital.

Time was when Poonamallee played its part in history. Under the Vijianagar dynasty it was the headquarters of a *Naick*, or Chief. In 1678 it was plundered by the Marathas. Ceded to the British in 1750, it became a military cantonment in 1777. The present hospital and adjacent buildings are said to occupy the site of the old Fort.

Bearing to the right the car sped along a well-shaded avenue of tamarinds and acacia trees, to a toll-gate near a small village. Here much tooting of the horn was necessary to induce three heavily laden bullock wagons to move aside. They had arrogated the thoroughfare to themselves as completely as certain persons arrogate salvation.

A little more and the wide-flung plain was dominated by the celebrated knoll known as St. Thomas' Mount, its summit crowned by the white church to Our Lady erected by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century. Here, according to ancient tradition, the doubting Apostle, he "who is called Didymus," suffered martyrdom on December 21, A.D. 68. Certain it is that the hill, which is the only one in the neighbourhood, and which attains a height of about 220 feet above sea level, has been held in veneration from the earliest ages of Christianity. Mention of it is made by all old European travellers. Marco Polo writes of it in the beginning of the thirteenth century. According to him St. Thomas was accidentally killed on the Mount by the arrow of a fowler. Peculiar interest attaches to an ancient record in the Anglo-Saxon chronicle, which clearly states that in A.D. 883 King Alfred the Great of England despatched an envoy to India with alms to St. Thomas, in pursuance of a vow to devote various sums of money to certain Holy Places.

In 1507 Don Francisco di Almeida, Viceroy of Goa, sent four emissaries round the coast to prosecute enquiries on the spot. The report brought back by the two survivors of the mission was forwarded to the King of Portugal. Fourteen years later another Portuguese expedition proceeded to

the Mount from Pulicat. They found an ancient chapel. Excavations brought to light the remains of a prince styled Tani Mudelysar, and an inscribed stone which read : " I give one-tenth of my income from trade, both by sea and land, to this holy house so long as sun and moon shall endure. I charge my descendants to maintain it under pain of malediction." Finally, in 1524, Manuel de Frias was commanded by the King of Portugal to proceed in person to St. Thomas' Mount to establish the authenticity, or otherwise, of the legend associating it with the name of the Apostle. On arrival de Frias found three Portuguese priests in charge. Money was provided for repairs and additions. In the course of the work a broken lance was discovered in the foundations. This was regarded as the instrument whereby St. Thomas had met his death at the hands of a Brahmin. In 1547 a stone was dug up. On it were engraved various emblems, a cross and an inscription. This last has recently been deciphered by Doctor Burnell, who pronounces it to be in Pehlevi characters of the eighth century A.D. According to him the interpretation is : " In punishment by the cross the suffering of the true Christ, and God alone, and Guide forever pure." Tradition declares that St. Thomas was kneeling before this stone when a Brahmin transfixed him with a spear thrust, hence the spots on it are the martyred Apostle's blood. The Portuguese proceeded to build a large Church on the summit of the Mount. The stone, which is known as the " Bleeding Cross " is let into the right wall of the sanctuary above a side altar.

Writing of the Mount, in 1540, Corea stated that

a beacon fire was lit there nightly for the benefit of mariners who, upon sighting it, struck their sails and made obeisance.

Attracted by the sanctity of the place a colony of Portuguese settled in the neighbourhood founding the city of San Thome on the coast, which was subject to the King of Vijianagar.

Motoring through the village at the foot of the Mount I soon passed within a few yards of the high gateway beyond which a flight of stone steps, said to have been erected by the Armenian, Petrus Uscan, lead to the summit. Out of the narrow bazaar, then to left past the Cantonment Magistrate's Office. On the right stretched the parade ground.

Although now regarded as a somewhat sleepy spot, time was when the British Settlement at St. Thomas' Mount was the gayest place on the coast. Hither came Agent Greenhill, in 1654, to indulge in his favourite pastime of hawking. A garden house was purchased by the Council in 1658, and appears to have served as a convalescent home. In the following century the Company's servants owned as many as twelve hot-weather residences in the neighbourhood. One of those belonged to Stringer Lawrence, and was destroyed by the French during their attack upon Fort St. George in the middle of the eighteenth century. Madras was defended by Colonels Lawrence and Draper from December 12th, 1758, until February 27th in the following year. On the latter date the opportune arrival of an English Fleet, under Admiral Pecocke, caused Lally to withdraw. Meanwhile, on February 19th, a fierce engagement had been fought at St. Thomas' Mount

between Major Caillaud and the French, in which the English were victorious.

On past a big white cenotaph to the memory of Lieut.-Colonel S. Dalrymple, R.A. Over the railway crossing at Guindy, a neighbourhood best known in connection with the so-called summer house of the Governors of Madras erected prior to the annual hot weather exit in April to Ootacamund. This occupies a spacious park.

Straight along towards the Adyar River, here spanned by the Marmalong Bridge. To left of the approach stands a handsome statue of the King-Emperor George V. To right is the village of the Little Mount, also a spot of much sanctity, dominated by a low rocky eminence crowned by a white church to Our Lady of Health. Near the high altar a flight of steps leads to a cave, wherein the Apostle Thomas is held to have sought refuge from his persecutors. A cleft in the rock admits a glimmer of light. Through it a Brahman is said to have thrust a spear and wounded the Apostle who, escaping, made his way to the Big Mount and there suffered martyrdom.

Over Marmalong Bridge. The left bank of the river appeared many-coloured as Joseph's coat, where all the clothes, for miles around, lay spread out on the low land commanding the *dhobi ghat.* Along a wide road bordered by banyans, tamarinds and the conspicuous sausage tree of Madagascar. To left, at a short distance from the highway, stretched the Long Tank, its embankment fringed with a double row of tall palms. To one part clung a picturesque colony of palm huts. Further on was a small Hindu shrine and, beyond again, a

masjid. In turn the Military Grass Farm, Butchery and Bakery were passed on the right. On the same side lay the Horticultural Gardens established in 1835, and St. George's Cathedral, Teynampet, a yellow building set in a big bare compound seemingly several sizes too large. Erected by Colonel de Haviland, it was consecrated by Bishop Middleton in 1816. Near here I turned off to left. I had reached my journey's end.

Regarding the respective merits of the routes via Vellore and the Rice Causeway, I will limit myself to quoting two remarks on the subject. Those who like can draw their own conclusions.

First Motorist: "Of course, you took the short cut over the Rice Causeway. Everybody does."

Second Motorist: "Came by the Rice Causeway, did you? Never heard of any one else doing so. I always keep to the Old Madras Road through Vellore."